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**A Tale of Twelve Teachers:
Education and Democratisation
in Russia and South Africa**

by

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Abstract

This study explores primary school teachers' experiences of the changes that have occurred in education since the end of apartheid in South Africa and the end of communist rule in Russia. It outlines the national educational contexts and critically examines the nature and implementation of new policies in these two 'transitologies'. International literature on teacher responses to educational reform and on the potential of schooling to be democratic and to develop democracy in society is explored as background to the study.

The research is based on two periods of field work in each country, between 1996 and 1998. In the second phase, case studies were developed of six Russian and six South African teachers, incorporating lesson observation and interviews about their life histories, educational experiences, classroom practice, and attitudes toward the educational reforms.

The findings, based on the individual case studies and a cross-case analysis, reveal that teachers experience a range of 'competing imperatives' which make a coherent perspective and consistent practice difficult, even where teachers agree in spirit with the reforms. Their responses to these dilemmas depend on a number of individual and contextual factors, many of them arising from the personal life experiences of the teacher. For each, the construction of a coherent self-identity, despite the scope of the changes experienced, has been an important part of the process of transition.

Chapter One - Introduction

Educational reform is a key strategy by which governments attempt to influence the processes and outcomes of schooling. A variety of imperatives, economic, ideological, or political, might motivate such reforms. Yet evidence suggests that such attempts rarely have a profound impact on life in classrooms. When these classrooms are in countries in transition to democracy, the imperatives are especially compelling, but the challenges equally daunting. Additionally, the social justice issues at stake are thrown into relief.

How have primary school teachers in Russia and South Africa experienced the reforms and changes in these new democracies? How have their perceptions and experiences been expressed in their classroom practice? And what are the factors which have influenced individual teachers' responses to educational and social change in these contexts? These are important questions for a number of reasons.

Firstly, while the process seems at times to be thwarted and chaotic, there is a discernible global trend for countries to move toward democratic government. There is clearly wide support for this course, reflected in the fact that representative democracy has become a condition for a state's participation in many international forums and for the receipt of international aid - even though what constitutes a democracy may be interpreted very loosely. Russia and South Africa are important exemplars of this trend. In the early 1990s, the end of communist government in Russia, and the end of apartheid in South Africa, marked the closing of eras within these countries, and also helped to create as well as to reflect an international optimism about transition towards democracy. There is much to learn from studying the processes in these countries.

Secondly, there is the expectation that education has the potential to support this process of democratisation, and that reform to schooling can be linked causally to the creation and maintenance of a democratic society. In both Russia and South Africa, there have been significant changes to education policy accompanying political democratisation. These changes include virtually every aspect of education, from how education is financed and governed, to curriculum and pedagogy. The connection between changes to schooling and democratisation is clearly assumed, but begs examination.

Thirdly, at the classroom level, this process of democratisation relies on teachers. Their co-operation, their agency, and their capabilities are all essential to the successful implementation of changes to the nature of curriculum and of classroom dynamics. These attitudes, capacities and skills are often implicitly taken for granted by those who generate new education policy. While a growing body of literature has examined the nature of teaching and teachers, and has suggested factors which might affect their role in the process, few studies have looked closely at these factors at work.

Finally, raising doubts about the inevitability and manageability of democratisation through education, is the fact that the process is far from simple. In fact, it is very complex, and often contrary, due in part to the fact that it relies so heavily on teachers. Many studies have borne out that the interface between policy and practice has its own dynamics which are not manipulated by edict alone. Teachers are agents who interpret, mediate and transform policy – or interfere, resist and confound its aims, depending on how one views the process and its outcomes. By examining the

role that teachers have played in reform implementation in Russia and South Africa, and how they perceive this role, it is hoped that something of these dynamics and the forces which shape them will be illuminated.

The study is based on two periods of fieldwork in each country. The first phase was an exploration of the educational contexts and issues. In order to create a close-grained portrait of teachers within these contexts, the second phase developed case studies of individual primary school teachers – six Russians and six South Africans – in a range of schools. These case studies have explored a number of dimensions of teachers' lives, work and attitudes. Teachers' opinions about political and educational changes and their classroom practice have been examined in the context of their life histories and in the situational constraints and facilitators they experience. In the analysis, the individual cases were juxtaposed to generate a cross-case level of data in addition to the case study level. The findings reveal patterns in terms of teachers' responses to educational change in these new democracies, but also highlight how each case is unique.

Perspectives

This study is situated within the field of comparative education. Comparison of the two countries reveals a number of important similarities but some glaring differences as well. The assumption, however, is that as human beings all the subjects have some degree of commonality in their responses to change, and that as individuals a number of personal factors will affect how they have responded to their experiences. The national context is extremely important, as it sets the overall policy agenda and helps to determine such issues as the training of teachers and their working

conditions. However, it is only one of the influences acting upon the teachers, and individuals within one country, especially one as culturally and economically diverse as South Africa, can be very different from each other. Therefore, this is not simply a study comparing Russian teachers with South African teachers as two distinct groups; rather, it is a comparative study of a number of individuals from these two countries.

The research basis of this study is within the qualitative research tradition. As such it reflects an epistemology which acknowledges the subjectivity of human experience, and the importance of individuals' perspectives on their situations. The study was also informed by a number of complementary theoretical perspectives. Symbolic interactionism has been a very useful viewpoint in a study which analyses the relationship between social forces and individual agency, as have Giddens' sociological perspectives on the question of individual identity within a social context of modernity. Concepts from literature in the critical tradition, which evaluates the potential (and shortcomings) of schooling's role in social transformation, have also been important components of the framework of the study. These perspectives are elaborated further in the literature review.

The Thesis - Outline

The remainder of the thesis is divided into six chapters. The first of these, chapter two, surveys the literature on the substantive themes of the study: educational reform and teachers. It considers what research in other contexts has revealed about policy as a process, and about the roles that teachers play at the interface of policy and practice, with special reference to the link between education and democracy.

The nature of teacher identity is also explored: is there something about teaching and teachers which helps to shape their attitudes and practice in contexts of change? In addition to problematising the process of reform as it relates to teachers, the chapter also examines critically the social role of schooling, and how the gaps between social needs and classroom realities might begin to be bridged.

In chapter three, the national contexts of Russia and South Africa are explored individually and comparatively. The focus in the discussion is on the reforms and changes to education which have come out of the recent transitions to democracy experienced in the two countries, and these are evaluated critically.

In chapter four, the methodology of the study is outlined. The first part of this chapter explores the purposes of case study approaches, and how to make the best use of them to generate understanding which has relevance to the widest possible audience. The second section describes the methods and tools used in the field to gather data, and considers the issues of language and of cross-cultural research.

The two findings chapters follow. The first of these, chapter five, outlines the cross-case findings, exploring patterns within the experiences and responses of the case study teachers. The common dilemmas experienced by teachers in these contexts, and the means by which they attempt to resolve them - or at least to live with them - are described. In chapter six, five of the case studies are presented - three from South Africa, and two from Russia. Each of these exemplifies some of the patterns detailed in chapter five, and each is also unique.

In the final, concluding chapter, the findings of the study are situated within theories about teaching, about reforms to education, and about human responses to change, and some tentative suggestions are offered as to how the important process of democratisation in education might be made more viable for its most important agents – teachers.

A note on terminology, which pertains to the whole thesis but especially to the third chapter: in writing about South Africa, the issue of race inevitably becomes a focal point of discussion. Race and its constituent categories (such as black and white) are social constructs, and many writers use inverted commas to indicate this and to distance themselves from the assumptions embedded in the discourse about race. It would simply be too cumbersome to have used inverted commas throughout this thesis. Additionally, as the associated concepts are very real to those subjects who discuss them, it would not be a very accurate reflection of their perspectives to bracket them. Finally, there are many other concepts – social class, for example, or professionalism – which equally are social constructs. To bracket all of them would be to pepper the writing with endless punctuation which would be de-meaning and ultimately absurd.

To position the study theoretically, we turn now to the literature on teachers and educational reform.

Chapter Two - Literature Review: **Teachers and Educational Reform**

*Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow*

(T S Eliot: "The Hollow Men")

This chapter will survey literature related to the main themes of this study: educational reform, particularly as it pertains to democracy, and teachers' responses to reform. Some of the ways in which reform is defined and described will be outlined; and international trends in the nature and purposes of legislated reform will be highlighted. The review will include a discussion of critical perspectives on the social role of schooling, with special reference to the relationship between education and democracy. The role of teachers in educational reform will be set in the context of literature on teacher thinking, to demonstrate and explain what emerges as virtually a universal pattern: the 'conservatism' of teachers with regard to the implementation of imposed reform. Finally, these gaps between teachers and legislated change will be explored, along with some theoretical and practical approaches with potential to bridge the discontinuities.

What is Educational Reform?

Definitions

Dictionary definitions of reform variously incorporate the concepts of renewal, transformation, and amendment: much more than mere change. Embedded in the notion of reform is a directed attempt to improve. In the education sector,

national reforms (as opposed to change induced through grass-roots movements) involve policy legislation aimed at restructuring the system, rewriting curricula, or altering classroom practice, with the assumption that such adjustments will lead to progress in the quality, efficiency or appropriateness of education delivered.

However, in reality, educational reform has different meanings for different interest groups. The use of the word 'reform' with its connotations of betterment, can, in effect, disguise policies that are far from the mark in their aims or implementation. In England and Wales, according to Campbell and Neill:

Since 1988 the word 'reform' has been corrupted by the way it has been used in political discourse, promiscuously attached to any untried proposal for *change*, in advance of the time when it could be known whether the change would lead to improvement. (Campbell and Neill 1994:1).

Power is a vital catalyst in movements for change. As Margaret Archer has stated:

...change occurs because new goals are pursued by those who have the power to modify education's previous structural form, definition of instruction, and relationship to society...the nature of education is rarely, if ever, the practical realisation of an ideal form of instruction as envisaged by a particular group. Instead, most of the time most of the forms that education takes are the political products of concession to allies and compromise with opponents. Thus to understand the nature of education at any time we need to know not only who won the struggle for control, but also how: not merely who lost, but also how badly...(Archer 1984: p 1 - 2)

Even reform movements which are widely supported, and which appear to capture "the prevailing political *Zeitgeist*" (Pollard *et al* 1994:2), rarely achieve the permanence that true improvement and progress might realise. Diane

Ravitch's account of movements in education in post-WWII America, *The Troubled Crusade*, illustrates how even the most zealously-supported and sweeping reforms can appear short-lived and vulnerable from an historical perspective.

Important to an understanding of reform, and critical to this study, is the fact that the lived experience of legislated changes by those forced to implement them often bears little resemblance to the outcomes anticipated by policy-makers. Teachers and other actors who are at what Pollard *et al* call the 'sharp end',

...whether or not they are in sympathy with the avowed purpose of the legislation, find their working day the arena in which such policies will ultimately be realised...Against the security of the known and the familiar, the education system finds itself obliged to engage with new, and in some cases alien, practices, their worth still untested, their essential political provenance highly dubious from a professional perspective. (Pollard *et al* 1994:2)

Thus, in terms of definition, the intention of reform may be fairly readily settled, but the process of implementation is not. One Canadian group defines the process of educational change metaphorically as "a planned journey into uncharted waters in a leaky boat with a mutinous crew" (Fullan 1993:24): a definition which captures the gulf between legislation on the one hand, and experience of implementation on the other. It is to the process side of this gulf that we turn in this study, to the "*dynamics and culture of change*" (Alexander 1995), for

...it is crucial to recognise that the analysis of the noise and heat of reform and the making of national policy still begs questions about the implementation and realisation of reform in schools and

classrooms. The struggles over interpretation and accommodation go on. (Ball 1990:214)

Descriptions and Trends

Commentators on education reform processes invariably refer to their complexity; some go so far as to depict them as completely chaotic. Fullan (1993) describes change as dynamic, non-linear, unpredictable and challenging. It could hardly be otherwise, since teaching itself is such a complex enterprise, full of diverse influences and competing imperatives (Alexander 1997).

Might not some of the confusions, paradoxes and contradictions to which commentators can so devastatingly point be not so much failings in teachers as inherent properties of the task to which those teachers are committed? Might not the job of primary teaching be in reality more subtle, complex and sophisticated than either of the public linguistic forms so far available - academic/technical and ideological - can convey? (Alexander 1995:12)

Such complexity means that change itself, on its own terms and at its own point in time, creates considerable stress, and, in addition, it may also exacerbate "...long-standing conundrums and uncertainties previously left unconsidered during a period of stability" (Grimmett 1995:119). The confusion and stress associated with processes of change become even more acute when the reform innovations are multiple, as is often the case (Ball 1990, Gillborn 1994, Pollard *et al* 1994, Wallace and McMahon 1994).

That change processes are so intricate, and so problematic, seems to be universally acknowledged, except by those in a position to dictate it. All too often, reforms are created, prescribed, and enforced by groups unfamiliar with the realities of the teacher's task.

Planned change becomes the preoccupation of the administrators who continue to try to fix the system. For teachers, change becomes a matter of coping with management's penchant for educational fads. (Baker *et al* in Fullan 1993:52)

In these calls for reform and in the options which are brought forth to change schools, there is surprisingly little attention to the role of teachers. Some of the proposals for change advocate 'teacher-proof' innovations, which can sustain the impetus for change in spite of the teachers. In some other cases, teachers are absent from the discourse about change. In yet other cases, the role of teachers is not central to the proposals for change. (Villegas-Reimers and Reimers 1996:469)

...the class teacher is shown to be very much at the end of a line: receiving messages about practice which he or she has had little or no part in constructing and which may be ambiguous and imprecise; undertaking complex and demanding tasks with which some of those outside the classroom fail to engage except at a relatively superficial level; and therefore sometimes forced into a defensive or rationalising posture in the face of new ideas. (Alexander 1995:99)

Meanwhile, political agendas - complex and opaque as they may be - often play as great a role in policy formation as empirical evidence and academic debate (Alexander 1997, Garman 1995, Goodson 1995). Ball (2000) distinguishes between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' reform, on the basis of the gaps between how policy is represented politically, and what its real effects are.

To what extent are generalisations about reform possible across national contexts? The prescriptive nature of reform, and its distance from the classroom sites of implementation, are described by many in terms of international trends. (Exceptions to this rule are so unusual - Swedish reform in the 1960's being a rare example - that these are held up as exemplary anomalies.) While statements about world-wide patterns in educational reform tend to be impressionistic, with little verifiable comparative or longitudinal evidence to back them up, there is certainly the *perception* among many academics that the current pace and nature of reform is international.

A wave of education reforms is sweeping the globe. At all levels, counties, municipalities, departments and states are expecting more and new things from schools. International organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and regional banks are calling for renewed efforts to sustain these reforms. Globalisation, the search for new sources of competitiveness, and the goals of democracy, peace, and tolerance have heightened the expectations of the public about schools and education systems. (Villegas-Reimers and Reimers 1996:469)

The quotation above alludes to a world-wide increase in the pace of change, and this is backed up by other commentators (Fullan 1993, Smyth 1995, Skilbeck 1990). The broad consensus among critics is that these current movements are economically-driven, and not in the best interests of teachers or learners. International recession and market globalisation have led to funding cutbacks, resulting in deteriorating conditions and lowered morale among teachers (Broadfoot and Osborn 1993), and in commodification by governments, who try to control the commodity through reform legislation while decentralising accountability (Ball 1990, Pollard *et al* 1994, Smyth 1995). The control that governments attempt to exercise is growing in the face of external and internal pressures on countries: "...the imperatives that shape the nation state and the perceived threats to political nationalism from religious and ethnic forces, transnational corporations and international agencies, have caused the state authorities in all nations to exercise increasing control over education policy and practice" (Porter 1999:46). Centralisation and performance measurement, and the competency-based view associated with it, tend to generate reforms which exacerbate the marginalisation of teachers as professionals:

...its undisclosed agenda is to silence teachers' professional judgement, and to impose in its place a preferred view of teaching that is allegedly value neutral but which, in reality, is constrained, contrived, easily quantified and compliant. (Smyth 1995:4)

However, often trends which are convincingly described as global are confined to movements in relatively stable, western industrialised countries. While the changes in the newly democratic states of Russia and South Africa contain elements of the above generalisations, they also differ substantively in other areas, and at least in their intention, are meant to offer a greater 'extended professionalism' (Hoyle 1970) to teachers. However, as will be explored in the next chapter, this process has been far from straightforward in these two countries.

Education and Democracy: critical perspectives and potential

Is reform in new democracies then somehow fundamentally different from other educational reforms which constitute the international trends suggested above? What is the link between education and democracy, and how can this link be nurtured? These are important questions in a world moving towards democracy: in 1973, only 25% of the world's nations were democracies, while in 1996, the figure was 68% (Leftwich 1996 cited in Davies 1999). At least in theory, education can be used to help create and support democracy, just as under authoritarian governments it can be used to indoctrinate people into the values of those regimes. Human beings are not inherently democratic; the requisite skills and attitudes for democratic citizenship have to be learned (Aspin 1995; Harber 1997). Schooling, as an important site of socialisation, would seem to be a natural place for children to begin to acquire these skills and dispositions. Dewey's writing on this subject has been influential for a century, occasionally in the mainstream of education, and at times within alternative forms of schooling.

However, the relationship between education and democracy is not a simple one to disentangle, as there are often assumptions made that do not bear up well under scrutiny. Some go so far as to suggest that education itself is by nature democratic:

Education is concerned above all with autonomy...The pursuit of truth in all its various forms, the generation, growth, dissemination, criticism of, and communication about, new knowledge, all involve their own ethical imperatives – and all of them are democratic (Aspin 1995: 41 – 44)

However, before one makes claims about the link between education and democracy, especially at the system level, it is worth remembering that education has often been used to prop up illegitimate dictatorships (Hanson 1997). Also, as Green (1990) has pointed out:

...one is struck by the poor correlation in Europe between the spread of democratic ideas and institutions and the geographical map of educational 'advance'. The most extensive systems of mass education were often found in those countries with the most enduring and authoritarian of absolutist monarchies...One of the great ironies of educational history is that the more 'democratic' nineteenth-century powers like France, England and the USA, which had all undergone political transformations, were forced to look to the autocratic German states for examples of educational reform to adopt at home. (p 31 – 32)

While it is probably true that 'people who can't think are ripe for dictatorships' (Carl Rogers quoted in Meighan 1994), it is the nature of education which decides what kind of thinking will be the result of schooling. Education has come under a veritable barrage of criticism for its inability to rise above structures which are inherently anti-democratic and which reproduce existing authoritarian values and structures. These critical perspectives emphasise the social role of education - and therefore the wider implications, for society and for justice, of tampering with its structures and content. From this perspective,

reform goes beyond the definitions above, and becomes an ideological and power struggle between interest groups over contested terrain. Such criticism accuses traditional educational theory of ignoring “the latent principles that shape the deep grammar of the existing social order, ...(and also)... those principles underlying the genesis and shape of its own logic” (Giroux 1983:74). The failure of schooling to be other than a cog in this structure has led some to argue for ‘deschooling’ (such as Illich 1971), or at least ‘reschooling’ (Harber 1997, Porter 1999), which demands a substantive reconstitution of education systems and processes.

The role of education in cultural reproduction, and the potential, despite systemic constraints, for intervention in this process, are focal points of the discussion. In this context:

...schools are complex organisations whose relation to the larger society is mediated by, among other things, social movements; these have their own agendas, which help determine the configuration of school life...the sites of social and ideological struggle, particularly the classroom, are spaces of genuine change, modification, unintended consequences. (Aronowitz and Bonough 1983:xii)

and

...schooling must be analysed as a societal process, one in which different social groups both accept and reject the complex mediations of culture, knowledge and power that gives form and meaning to the process of schooling. (Giroux 1983:62)

Acting within such a setting, ‘critical educators’ have constantly to mediate reflectively, engaging with the nature of their own institutions.

To Giroux, this means

...speaking *to* important social, political and cultural issues from a deep sense of the politics of their own location and the necessity to engage and often unlearn the habits of institutional (as well as

forms of racial, gender and class-specific) privilege that buttress their own power while sometimes preventing others from becoming unquestioning subjects. (1992:35)

These complex relations are part of the structures, curriculum, and pedagogy of schooling, and therefore, reform to any of these elements constitutes a powerful social force. The hierarchies of the educational system at all levels, what counts as knowledge, and the nature of classroom activities, relationships and discourse, all transmit messages, consciously or unconsciously, about the social world and who controls it; attempts to manipulate or resist these are not value-neutral, and constitute power struggles (Bernstein 1974, Apple 1990, Cornbleth 1990, Goodson 1995). Resistance to these agendas, even that which is unconscious, is “a symptom of an incipient alternative agenda” (Aronowitz and Bonough:1983).

It is the moral and value dimensions which are thus potentially altered profoundly when changes are made to education. These elements are deeply embedded and difficult to extract, however, and therefore difficult to impact directly and consciously.

(Schools)...set such a store on the seemingly most insignificant details of dress, bearing, physical and verbal manners...The principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit...The whole trick of pedagogic reason lies precisely in the way it extorts the essential while seeming to demand the insignificant: in obtaining respect for forms and forms of respect which constitute the most visible and at the same time the best hidden manifestations to the established order. (Bourdieu in Giroux 1983:39-40)

The difficulty in controlling the process of values transmission, and the pitfalls in trying to alter it, make for unforeseeable consequences (Fullan 1993, Berlak

and Berlak 1981, Ball 1994, Gillborn 1994), a fact not readily accepted by policy-makers imposing reform in the hope of achieving specific, clear objectives.

Certainly the current international focus on instrumentality and performativity is seen as antithetical to the development of equity and of democratic values; these become sidelined as issues, or their meanings usurped and neutralised.

...the continuing dependence on market solutions to social and cultural problems has severely limited the actions of those who are expected to express the democratic will of the people...a unipolar world characterised by the ideological and cultural domination of free market capitalism threatens to perpetuate social and economic inequities under the banner of free markets, competitiveness, consumerism and a drive for technological efficiency (Porter 1999:33 – 34)

...words like 'education', 'democracy' and 'citizenship' are steeped in a technocratic rationality which considers education primarily in instrumental terms and interprets democracy as a system of political management rather than a distinctive form of social and moral life. (Sultana 1995:141)

Democracy itself comes in different forms, and 'majority rule' or 'competitive electoral politics' (Davies 1999) do not guarantee a culture of democracy. The literal meaning of the word, derived from the Greek words 'demos' and 'kratos' is 'rule by the people' (Harber 1997). It is distinct from all of the following forms of rule: aristocracy (rule by an elite class), monarchy (rule by one person, usually hereditary), oligarchy (rule by a few), plutocracy (rule by the wealthy), patriarchy (rule by the 'fathers' – ie older men), and ochlocracy (rule by the mass) (Aspin 1995). Democracy is usually managed through representation, due to the impracticalities of direct rule. South Africa and Russia have in the last decade achieved this level of democracy. However, as Harber (1997) points out, representative democracy needs to be supported by a political culture which fosters active participation; this is a much more

challenging development. Similarly, Hartnett and Carr (1995) distinguish between two views of democracy: the classical notion, with moral implications, and the instrumental view of democracy as a form of representation. It is these first aspects of democracy that are most important to the critical approach to education, and most frequently overlooked, or even threatened. Among the moral implications of this view of democracy are 'the key ideas of equality, inclusiveness, freedom of speech and association' (Porter 1999:67), or in Aspin's view (1995), equality, freedom, tolerance, consideration of other people's interests, and respect for other people. Representative democracy, in which a majority may potentially be empowered to act in self-interested and unfair ways, cannot necessarily fulfil this role in the same way that deeper cultures of deliberative or participatory democracy can. According to this view, it is the role of education to acknowledge contestable positions in society and to allow them to co-exist, and to develop in learners the ability to make informed and rational choices about them. In terms of political literacy, essential to full democratic citizenship, this would mean a move from

...the common situation now where pupils learn preferences and predispositions towards certain political values and attitudes rather than others...to a genuine political education where there is an attempt to create critical awareness of political phenomena by open, balanced discussion and analysis of a range of evidence and opinions (Harber 1997:37).

If this role of education is to be fulfilled, what are the necessary elements that would constitute schooling? Democracy would need to be embedded within all the key aspects of education: structures, curriculum and pedagogy being three of the most important. In terms of structures, Davies (1999) gives the examples of the decentralisation of authority, and the presence of regional or local councils, school boards, student representative councils and parent advisory

groups as indicators of democracy within the administration of educational systems. Indicators of a democratic curriculum would include democratic citizenship as a subject and a cross-curricular theme. Even more importantly, at the heart of a democratic curriculum is an epistemology of knowledge as contestable. This epistemology would then be reflected in pedagogy which exercises learners' critical faculties: the opposite of what Freire (1972) calls the 'banking' model of education, in which facts are passed from the teacher to the student. Strategies for this approach might include the following:

...the use of hypothetico-deductive methods, discussion, debate, argument and independent research...rather than the teachers simply lecturing, instructing or employing other such didactic and more formal approaches (Aspin 1995:54).

Thus democratic approaches to pedagogy are often associated with 'progressive' approaches, sometimes called 'discovery learning', or, more reproachfully by traditionalists, 'trendy teaching methods'. However, as Alexander (1995) has pointed out, progressive education can create dilemmas for teachers who struggle with balancing constraint and freedom. In any case, a complete debunking of all teacher-led approaches is not helpful in encouraging one of the most important skills of democratic citizenship: the ability to listen to a point of view which might – possibly – be wiser than one's own.

Considering the above critical perspectives, it is apparent that reforms to education which attempt to promote democracy face major challenges in overhauling systems profoundly integrated with authoritarian principles, even in countries which are already political democracies. In countries emerging from authoritarian periods, the systems are likely to be even more 'polluted'

with these principles, as they were actively as well as covertly promoted (Hanson 1997). The challenge thus becomes even greater, and must occur on several fronts at the same time, including the deconstruction and reconstruction of structures, curriculum and pedagogy, and entailing a reworking of attitudes as much as practice.

Educational Reform: Doomed to Failure?

When one considers the pitfalls apparently inherent in legislated reform, it would seem that failure in implementation is inevitable without a virtual paradigm shift. Historical and comparative evidence (Alexander 1995, Ravitch 1983, Broadfoot and Osborn 1993, Fullan 1993, Brown and McIntyre 1993, Floden 1997, Skilbeck 1990) backs up the prediction that continuities, certainly at the level of pedagogy, prevail through successive reforms. As Webber states, this puts the problems surrounding reforms in new democracies into perspective:

...over the past twenty five years we have seen a veritable explosion in the amount of research conducted on this subject (educational reform). The conclusions drawn by many experts in the field are rather sobering, for they point to a record of failure, rather than success in reform implementation. It is in this context that we should judge the Russian reforms, for if reform has proved to be such a difficult matter in the relatively stable and prosperous countries of the West in their attempts to implement comparatively small-scale change, then the Russian scenario of a huge agenda calling for radical change in all aspects of the school's organisation, set against the backdrop of social upheaval and financial crisis, appears to offer rather bleak prospects. (Webber 2000:33)

On the one hand, Blenkin, Edwards, Gwyn and Kelly suggest that it is human nature to resist change.

This tendency to maintain the 'stable state' (Schön 1971)...is a recognisable feature of human nature...It is characterised by what Schön (1971) has termed 'dynamic conservatism', that tendency of individuals

and organisations to strive to maintain the status quo. Thus innovations are resisted by every possible device to ensure that they do not 'take'. They are ignored, opposed, isolated, redirected, subjected to whatever response seems most likely to kill them off or deflect them from their intended purpose of altering the circumstances under which we conduct our professional lives and the professional tasks we face. (Blenkin *et al* 1992).

On the other hand, perhaps under the right conditions this generalisation would break down. The tendency for reform legislation to ignore the 'teacher factor', and to underestimate the powerful subtleties of classroom life, makes its translation into practice highly problematic. In addition, reform policy-makers are often accused of 'jumping on bandwagons', constantly prescribing change based on the mood of the moment, and creating innovation fatigue among implementers (Ravitch 1983, Fullan 1993). To add to this list of deficiencies, the superficial tinkering born of ignorance not only results in policy failure; it generates hostility (Pollard *et al* 1994, Campbell and Neill 1994, Alexander 1997, Fullan 1993, Broadfoot and Osborn 1993). Successful change is not possible in such a climate.

So, reform which ignores the complexities and value-laden nature of education, which prescribes innovations to teachers while remaining stubbornly naive of their realities, and which alienates implementers in the process, seems by definition and by historical and comparative evidence to be doomed to failure (or at best, very limited success). Goodson (1995) refers to this state as a 'crisis of reform':

In some ways the crisis of reform is a crisis of prescriptive optimism - a belief that what is politically pronounced and backed with armouries of accountability tests will actually happen. (p 59)

The problem is that there is little evidence indicating that policy-makers are coming around to exploring the alternatives.

The Teacher Factor

Teacher Response to Reform

There is considerable difference between what teachers' roles 'should' or 'ought to' be in a democracy, and what their roles and responses actually are. It has been argued that in a democratic society, schools and teachers should have high levels of autonomy, as Porter (1999) suggests:

...if schools are to fulfil their democratic potential, the bureaucratic and arbitrary nature of state control of individual schools needs to be reduced so that democratic involvement can be restored at the level of the school in its community...New policy must place the teacher at the centre of the drive for greater democracy as well as for increased equality. (p 87) ...within national guidelines, and with local administrative support, there needs to be unequivocal transfer of the key educational decisions regarding curriculum, teaching and learning styles and assessment, to the school. (p 104)

It is also evident that reform which is prescriptive is by its very nature antithetical to democratic practice (Smyth 1995, Fullan 1993). However, as shown above, teachers are often left out of the equation in policy formulation, or their responses are predicted to be linear, and controllable if not compliant. Illustrating the folly of this belief, there exist a number of studies on teachers' responses to reform legislation of different kinds. This is complemented by a growing literature on teacher thinking, which helps to explain the typologies and patterns which emerge from empirical research on teachers in the process of reform implementation.

The PACE (Primary Assessment, Curriculum and Experience) study of teachers' responses to the 1988 Education Reform Act in England, and the subsequent

imposition of the National Curriculum and compulsory assessment procedures, generated the following typology:

compliance
incorporation
mediation
retreatism
resistance
(PACE study: Pollard *et al* 1994)

It was found both by this study and by Webb and Vulliamy (1996) that 'incorporation' was the most common response: that is, teachers most often consolidate innovations selectively into their own practice. The general findings in these studies, and in others (Fullan 1993, Sikes 1993, Nias 1989, Olson and Eaton 1987, Floden 1997) indicate that this selectivity protects teachers from radical change and allows them to sustain beliefs and practices which they do not want to give up.

...teachers reacted to the new initiatives...according to their prior beliefs and experiences, adopting those which were consonant with their existing practices and largely ignoring those which were not. (Webb and Vulliamy 1996:162)

It seems to be the case that the exercise of coercive power has challenged some teachers to explore their professional repertoire in order to find ways in which they can mediate the new requirements or incorporate them into their existing practices. They have thus sought to ensure that these new practices support, rather than undermine, their long-standing professional commitments. (Pollard *et al*:1994)

The coercion mentioned above is critical - one cannot help wondering where most teachers would have fit into the typology had the implementation of reform been accompanied by less comprehensive and compelling measures of accountability.

The process of incorporating selected aspects of a reform involves active mediation by the teacher. This mediation, which can be quite creative, becomes a critical point at which the reform initiative is translated - and therefore potentially modified beyond recognition - by the teacher. The image of the teacher as a neutral conduit between policy and the child is distorted and naive, ignoring teachers' active and creative selves and the fact that, whether or not they are fully aware of it, they have an agenda.

Policy, as Bowe and Ball (1992) argue, is less a linear or managerialist sequence of production and implementation than a cycle of creation and re-creation in which the policy only comes alive and acquires meaning in the hands of those who enact it...a policy 'script', however legalistically framed or tightly annotated, is still capable of many different interpretations and performances. (Alexander 1997:268-269)

This transformation of policy at the level of the classroom is predicted in the critical literature.

...mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction are never complete and are always faced with partially realised elements of opposition. (Giroux 1983:100)

Policies are always incomplete insofar as they relate to or map on to the 'wild profusion' of local practice. Policies are crude and simple. Practice is sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable...Policy *as* practice is 'created' in a trialectic of dominance, resistance and chaos/freedom. (Ball 1994:11)

It is this resistance and freedom which give teachers the opportunity - *if not necessarily the capacity* - to act as agents of democratic social change, whether or not policy initiatives support their beliefs.

Society is dependent upon the quality of (teachers') judgements, values, knowledge and sensitivities, in particular in social contexts, to negotiate acceptable solutions to issues of authority in education; to sustain the development of democratic values in the wider

society; and to create a social environment in which children can deliberate about, and reflect critically upon, the nature of the good life and the good society. It is teachers who should be a centre of resistance to totalitarian, centralist and utopian thinking and control within society. They are a critical pivot between the state, parental power, institutional power and the development of democratic values and attitudes in each new generation. (Hartnett and Carr 1995:43)

What makes one teacher a radical change agent resisting centralised reform, another a radical change agent adopting and promoting new initiatives, while most are selective, but essentially conservative, mediators of reform? There are both external and internal factors likely to affect the process (Broadfoot and Osborn 1993; Fuller *et al* 1996;), helping to determine the degree of compliance or resistance and to shape its practice. Among the external factors are the pace, scale, coherence, judged appropriateness, and congruence with current practice of the reform itself, along with the support structures accompanying its implementation, and institutional and wider societal cultures and ‘innovation histories’ (Webb and Vulliamy 1996:161).

...individuals and agencies are in a position to influence what teachers do by controlling the provision of materials, curriculum guidelines, and finance, and in the determination of the conditions in which teachers work. Influence might also be exerted at an ideological level through perpetuation of beliefs of beliefs and ideologies of good classroom practice. (Calderhead 1987:1-2)

But when we consider that, in addition to the somewhat deterministic inputs beyond their control, individual teachers are free - within limits - to act according to their own consciences, then each teacher’s personal beliefs and sense of self have a vital impact on how they accept and shape reform initiatives. In what ways do these affect how and why teachers mediate reform?

What is it with teachers?

Studies indicate that teaching is a profoundly personal profession, in which individuals invest a great deal of themselves: an investment which they naturally want to protect.

...they exist as people before they become teachers, and their work calls for a massive investment of their 'selves'. (Nias 1989:3)

...their own person is integrally part of their practice, placing their self-esteem constantly at risk...(Grimmett 1995:118)

Thus, teachers' responses to reform are shaped - or from the point-of-view of the policy-maker, constrained - by their own subjectivities.

Teachers can be expected to be committed voluntarily to change, collaboration and improved education for their students. But such voluntary commitments are, in most cases, unlikely to extend to reshaping or abandoning the basic structures in which teachers' own interests and identities have been formed. (Hargreaves 1995:172)

Modifications in professional practice often require individuals to alter deeply-rooted, self-defining attitudes, values and beliefs; the personal redefinition which this involves is likely to be slow, stressful, and sometimes traumatic. (Nias 1989:62)

The life history of a teacher has a very significant effect on each individual in terms of their views of themselves as teachers; studies have revealed that many become teachers because of personal moral convictions (Nias 1989, Nixon 1995, Fullan 1993, Huberman 1993, Zeichner *et al* 1993, Sikes and Measor 1985, Casey 1993). In addition, as teachers, they join a constituency which nurtures particular attitudes and which is regarded by outsiders as possessing certain characteristics. The professional culture of teaching is an "historical and objective societal force" leaving an "ideological imprint upon the psyche itself" (Giroux 1983:149). Thus, it can reinforce the construct of teaching as a deeply personal and individualistic profession. Many teachers work in considerable

isolation, despite in the UK an increased tendency to collaborate (Webb and Vulliamy 1994, Pollard *et al* 1994). This isolation may be part of the school culture, or motivated by a teacher's own view of how teachers should operate; it may also be a reaction to enforced (and therefore false) collaboration or a desire to hide from demands in the 'black box' (Ball 1990) of the classroom.

The precise nature, and therefore impact, of the professional teaching culture is not universal. Teachers' views of professional responsibility are shown by Broadfoot and Osborn to be culture-specific: in their study, they find English teachers' conceptions of their professional role to be more complex and open than are French teachers'; their sense of accountability is found to be internalised, and their practices therefore difficult to impact through the imposition of external accountability measures (Broadfoot and Osborn 1993).

Whatever the professional culture:

It is the ideology, or, to put it another way, the conception of their professional role which plays the most fundamental part in determining what teachers do. If policy changes ride roughshod over such ideologies, and fail to take them into account, the result is likely to be widespread resentment, a lowering of morale, and, possibly, a reduced effectiveness. (Broadfoot and Osborn 1993:124)

Ironically, the interior, personalised nature of teachers' relationships to their jobs may be no more accessible and comprehensible to teachers themselves than the sometimes complex, unclear and unrealistic exterior demands of policy. When teachers describe how they think about their jobs, and attempt to access the 'deeper levels' of their practice (Alexander 1995), their descriptions are often characterised by contradictions or circular thinking (Wagner 1987, Nias 1989, Berlak and Berlak 1981, Calderhead 1987). These can in part be explained by the competing imperatives and complexities of their task (Alexander 1997),

in part by the myriad and sometimes contradictory social and personal influences upon their thinking (Pollard *et al* 1994, Broadfoot and Osborn 1993, Nias 1989), and, in some cases, in part by a lack of encouragement, opportunity, or capacity to reflect on resolutions to the dilemmas inherent in teaching (Berlak and Berlak 1981, Hartnett and Carr 1995, Hursh 1995). The resulting ambiguity and confusion of personal intent can further problematise the relationship of teacher to reform.

Thus, the highly personal, and therefore defensive, world of teaching, with its myriad individual, social, and professional domains of influence, and the dilemmas which result, is not readily controlled or modified by policy.

Bridging the Gap: theoretical approaches and practical links

As the above indicates, there is a growing body of literature describing and theorising about the intricacies of teaching and teachers, the failure of policy to take these into account, and the ensuing gulf between reform policy formulation and its implementation. Ultimately, however, change will be deemed necessary, and sometimes with good reason. Resistance may be a conscience-motivated decision by teachers to foil imposed reform; on the other hand, it is sometimes the case that the failure of innovation to engage teachers, or of teachers to engage with innovation, is a default position born of misunderstanding or impotence. How then can the situation of multiplicity of needs, views and influences, and the gaps between macro (social) and micro (individual) levels, policy and practice, and thought and action, be approached constructively?

Theoretical Bridges

At the level of discussion, teachers remain 'uncoupled': their actions curiously disembodied from their thoughts; the idiom of their classroom lives cleft from the formal curriculum; their practice divorced from the wider social and political context.

Researchers have torn the teacher out of the context of the classroom, plagued her with various insidious effects (Hawthorne, novelty, Rosenthal, halo), parcelled out into discrete skills the unity of intention and action present in teaching practices. (Butt *et al* (1992) in Goodson 1995:58)

Most of our everyday and scientific languages fragment social activity, including schooling, into the separate and distinct categories of consciousness (for example, values, beliefs, attitudes, motives, personality traits etc), observable behaviour, and social context (for example, socio-economic status, classroom climate). These separations in our language make it extraordinarily difficult to talk and think about schooling as a continuing social process wherein context and consciousness are joined in the acting moment. (Berlak and Berlak 1981:111)

The loose-coupling viewpoint enables us to recognise the basic problem of dissociation between curriculum discourse and curriculum practice: the lack of mesh between, on the one hand the (planning-derived) protocols of procedure and vocabulary by means of which curricular matters are formally addressed, and, on the other hand, the idioms of everyday conduct through which the teachers of particular schools reconcile their own satisfactions, capabilities, and circumstances with external requirements and support. (Reynolds and Saunders 1987:213)

...the best of intentions can unwittingly complement the moves to uncouple the teacher from the wider picture. Stories and narratives can form an unintended coalition with those forces which would divorce the teacher from a knowledge of political and micropolitical perspectives from theory, from broader cognitive maps of influence and power. (Goodson 1995:63)

Yet these relationships are crucial to understanding of teachers' actions and the effect of policy on them. In fact, to members of the Popular Memory Group:

What is most important is neither the 'objective' (structure) nor the 'subjective' (culture), but the relationship between them; neither past nor present, but the relationship between them; neither dominant memory nor commonplace understandings, but the relationship between them; neither the personal/individual nor large-scale changes, but the relationship between them. (Casey 1993:12)

There do exist 'metaparadigms' (Hargreaves 1994) which attempt to find reconciliatory means of analysis. The Berlaks (1981) use the concept of *dilemma* "to provide a language for examining the macro in the micro, the larger issues that are embedded in the particulars of the everyday schooling experience" (Berlak and Berlak 1981:4).

The place of schooling in social changes continues to be problematical. We can neither decide in advance that teachers are willing or oblivious henchmen of the social system or creators of social change...The dilemma language only provides a way of formulating and inquiring into these issues while acknowledging the continuous reflexivity of person and environment as these may be related to change and stability in the social process. (Berlak and Berlak 1981:134)

Illuminating this relationship between the teacher and the environment, and how teachers resolve the dilemmas that this relationship poses, are steps toward understanding the mediation of reform. Broadfoot and Osborn (1993) combine sociological and psychological perspectives, to the same aim:

The traditional rather reductionist sociological concern with the relative power of a variety of external forces both to determine policy and to impact on practice was combined with the psychologist's concern to clarify the relationship between teaching and society as this is effected in the minds of teachers.

Thus the object of the research was to go beyond the formal and explicit differences enshrined in legal statutes and contracts to the actual perspectives held by individual teachers which give meaning to their actions and now, in particular, govern their responses to 'reformitis' (Weiler, 1988) being brought about by the speed and scale of social change. (Broadfoot and Osborn 1993:8)

The product is 'dialectical accounts which seek to relate consciousness and context in a strategic way' (Broadfoot and Osborn 1993:9).

Symbolic interactionism is a perspective which connects individual consciousness and action to the wider society, thereby facilitating analysis of how the macro and micro levels are linked in education and how educational reform initiated at one level may be transformed at the other, and the reciprocal impact that this transformation may have in turn. It attempts to be "...a science of society that provides a satisfactory account of the relationship of individual human behaviour to the basic question of continuity and change in society" (George Herbert Mead in Berlak and Berlak 1981:112). The focus is on action, and the dialectic that is part of it: "The dialectic is 'within' persons who are simultaneously pawns and originators of action, and between persons and an outside world that at every moment is in them and upon them" (Berlak and Berlak 1981:131) This action is by the individual in the present, but is caused by social interactions and interactions within the person in the past as well as the present:

People are not brainwashed and conditioned so much as constantly testing and reassessing their truths. Truth is arrived at through interaction, and it is also transformed in the process of interaction. (Charon 1995:28)

In the end action means *choice* to the symbolic interactionist, at least to some degree. Humans *act* and do not *react*; they *use* their environment and not simply *respond* to it. Humans define their world, and then they redefine it again and again. They consider their past and balance their future options. Action becomes a complex interplay of both overt and covert activity, a result of interpreting and controlling the direction of the stream of action. (Charon 1995:141)

Anthony Giddens' work *Modernity and Self-Identity: self and society in the late modern age* (1991) also offers highly relevant theories about how individuals interact with modern society, and, crucially, how they construct their identities in this context. His arguments become especially cogent in the light of the research on how closely many teachers identify personally with their jobs. Giddens notes that among the defining characteristics of late modernity are the scope, pace and profoundness of change, and in this context, "...the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change" (p 33). A coherent biography becomes an emotional anchor providing "ontological security" - critical for the individual who understands that "...on the other side of what might appear to be quite trivial aspects of day-to-day action and discourse, chaos lurks" (p 36).

...feelings of self-identity are both robust and fragile. Fragile, because the biography the individual reflexively holds in mind is only one 'story' among many other potential stories that could be told about her development as a self; robust, because a sense of self-identity is often securely enough held to weather major tensions or transitions in the social environments which the person moves (p 55).

Times of acute change, what Giddens calls 'fateful moments', force an individual to question habits, "...even sometimes those most closely integrated with self-identity" (p 131). However, overhauling one's identity and practice is only one possible response to these demands, and given the imperative of coherence, and a meaningful 'trajectory' from the past to the future, it is not necessarily the most likely. He further outlines ensuing 'dilemmas of the self', and the pathologies which might arise from them: unification v fragmentation; powerlessness v appropriation;

authority v uncertainty; and personalised v commodified experience (pp 187 - 201). These dilemmas are evident in the sorts of issues that the literature on teachers and educational reform has uncovered.

These theoretical perspectives help to explain how teachers both react to, and shape, the social changes around them, and how their own reflexive construction of a coherent biography is a vital part of the process of becoming teachers in contexts of social and educational reform. These theories help to illuminate the 'shadowy' areas between reform and teachers - shadows created and perpetuated by discussion which fragments the processes of implementation, or treats them, and teachers' identities and agency, as non-problematic.

Practical Strategies

Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, most literature on how the implementation of innovation can be helped to become a practical reality focuses on how teachers may be supported in the process. However, equally important, is the need for policy-makers to rethink their approaches to design and prescription. As Harley *et al* (2000) point out, policy must move beyond political symbolism and social meliorism and face squarely 'what is': knowing who is in schools and what is actually happening. It would then be possible to create policy that will not be annihilated by complete 'tissue rejection' (Hoyle 1970), and to judge what forms of support might make success feasible.

Teacher education - of the right kind - has proven to be a viable strategy of support: "...large-scale studies show time and time again that staff or teacher

development is closely related to successful change” (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992:3). Staying with the critical perspective, this support should not consist simply of breaking down the policy into manageable (but still prescribed) chunks, such as in ‘how to’ training courses. The support should be in a form which permits debate while acknowledging the trauma of change, the attraction of the familiar and the necessities of classroom survival.

It is not healthy for teachers to be entirely uncritical or complacent, but it is also impossible to imagine continuous, public systemic critique as being sustainable for teachers without some structure that permits a reasonable degree of comfort and affirmation while encouraging a tolerance for ambiguity. (Grimmett 1995:119)

Pre-service and in-service training are obvious avenues for supporting teachers, but much depends on their design and delivery. These may be complemented by structural changes to staffing, introducing designated ‘change agents’ - such as, for example, advisory services or in-house specialists. In addition to weaknesses built into the individual components of this model, links between them can be problematic and the effort may be fragmented (Alexander 1995). Wallace and McMahon (1994) advocate ‘flexible planning strategies’ by administrators to allow, in turbulent times, the processes of change to adapt to unforeseeable circumstances, and to support the needs of everyone involved in an evolving and integrated way.

As Fullan (1993) points out: *“to restructure is not to reculture”* (p 49). The slow and complex process of change may require other flexible and responsive means to give it momentum. Many commentators advocate various forms of collaboration among teachers. Hargreaves (1995) describes collaboration as an *“...integrating principle of action, planning, culture, development, organisation*

and research" (p 150), and attributes to collaboration the potential for moral support, increased efficiency, improved effectiveness, reduced overload, synchronised time perspectives, 'situated certainty' (through the setting of agreed boundaries and goals), political assertiveness, increased capacity for reflection, organisational responsiveness, opportunities to learn and continuous improvement: a tall order indeed. (He also notes, however, the dangers of superficiality, complacency, a different form of conformism, and, especially when captured and controlled by outsiders, a co-optative and contrived foundation.) Focusing specifically on pedagogical change, Grimett (1995) points out the potential for teachers to learn from each other what individuals have not experienced personally, providing models for initial imitation which become "...beginning metaphors for reframing one's own practice" (p 122).

However, from a critical perspective again, teacher development, and support for them in the reform process, should not be separated from wider social realities.

If teacher development is disconnected from politics and from its historical and ideological roots, it, like schooling, will replace conscious social reproduction with unconscious social reproduction of the status quo. Educational change therefore has to be part of wider political change. As such it has to link with other bodies, interest groups and political parties...Failure to achieve this would make educational reform similar to whistling an attractive tune from the top of a mountain in a force ten gale: the tune may be nice, but the influence is nil. (Hartnett and Carr 1995:48-49)

Giroux also takes the notion of collaboration a step further, beyond partnership among teachers.

The interface between theory and practice is not at the point where 'radicals' (or policy-makers) provide prescriptions and parents, workers and the oppressed receive and utilise them; instead, it is at the point where these various groups come together and raise the

fundamental question of how they may enlighten each other.
(Giroux 1983:240)

However, in order for the constituencies involved to enlighten each other, it is necessary for the individuals to have a fairly clear understanding of their own positions. In addition to the external means of support outlined above, developing the internal capacity to comprehend and resolve educational dilemmas posed or affected by reform, and to place them critically in their wider context, is therefore important. To become a 'reflective practitioner' (Schön 1995), is to use "a repertoire of examples, images, understandings and actions" (p 130) to engage actively with situations as they arise. Coping with reform tests the repertoire of the reflective practitioner, demanding that they create coherent meaning out of strange and fluid phenomena:

...under conditions of dynamic complexity one needs a good deal of selective experience before one can form a plausible vision. (Fullan 1993:28)

In addition to coming to understand their own patterns of resolution (Berlak and Berlak 1981) and becoming, through reflection, more aware and flexible teachers, the ability to engage critically with their role in the education process and education's social role creates the potential for teachers to place change in its wider context and to choose how they position themselves to it. Fullan (1993) defines change agency as "...being self-conscious about the nature of change and the change process" (p 12). This self-conscious positioning incorporates interests beyond teachers' own professional survival and makes real reform possible.

If teachers are to become reflective, to raise questions of what is to be taught, to whom, how, and for what purpose, they must treat their classroom practices as problems and analyse how their classrooms

are supported or contradicted by the discourses and organisational structure of schooling. Education is political in the sense that the organisation of school and the curriculum content and practices are outcomes of contested political goals. The discourses of individualism, style and technique ignore the political and contested nature of education. (Hursh 1995:108-109)

...if teachers are to move beyond the role of being agents of cultural reproduction to that of being agents of cultural mobilisation, they will have to critically engage with the nature of their own self-formation and participation in the dominant society, including their role as intellectuals and mediators of the dominant culture. (Giroux 1983:68)

Can reflection (and the global emancipation that its proponents sometimes seem to promise) really equip teachers to cope with the demands of reform? Some commentators point out its limitations - and the possibility that too much reflection can be paralysing.

Expressing, debating, clarifying and reaffirming or altering basic assumptions and beliefs may be both necessary and constructive but it is undeniably challenging and ultimately exhausting and, for teachers, can result in much stress and a deep-rooted longing for a return to the comfort of the status quo. (Grimmett 1995:119)

The heightened consciousness that critical teachers have of their role in the perpetration of symbolic violence in schools can in fact lead to an even deeper sense of frustration and despair, rather than to the transformation of people, situations and structures. (Sultana 1995:132)

Questions have also been raised about whether the type of reflection advocated in some western teacher training models is appropriate in contexts with very different culture and human resource capacity (O'Donoghue 1994). Notwithstanding such warnings, if one adopts the critical view that educational policy and reform are problematic and political, then its intelligent - and therefore conscious and reflective - mediation by teachers is a social necessity. The precise nature of this reflection and its focus may vary in different contexts. As a practical strategy on the individual level, it can also help teachers to create

coherence in their understanding of reform policy and its mediation in their own practice - even if this coherence is gained at a cost. The common default alternative - passive, partial or inconsistent resistance to reform - is satisfying to no-one.

Conclusion

Literature on reform in education shows it to be problematic on a number of fronts. Like education itself, it is value-laden in a way so deeply embedded that it is difficult to gain sufficient distance from it to describe and analyse it. It attempts (often naively) to impose itself onto highly-complex and resolutely human targets: targets which, whether or not they have thought through the implications, have intricate agendas of their own, born out of myriad and sometimes conflicting influences. The prevailing sense is of disjointed chaos and a game of Chinese whispers gone wrong. Many teachers seem to live in the shadowy 'between': neither really accepting nor rejecting, and not exactly compromising; not letting reform own them, but not claiming it for themselves either. On the one hand, this may help them preserve worthwhile continuities that ill-conceived legislation has ignored, and may be a creative act of mediation based on reflective consciousness of children's - and society's - needs. On the other hand, when this is a passive or evasive position, it frustrates reform which might have positive elements, and opportunities for professional development are missed.

Whither the researcher of this tangle? According to Ball:

The challenge is to relate together analytically the ad hocery of the macro with the ad hocery of the micro without losing sight of the systematic bases and effects of ad hoc social actions: to look for the iterations embedded within chaos. (Ball 1994:15)

It is to these iterations - as manifested in South African and Russian primary school teachers - that we now turn. The next chapter will examine post-apartheid and post-communist educational reform, showing how some of these issues are manifested in these contexts, and in doing so, set the scene for the 'teachers' tales'.

Chapter Three: Comparative Education and the National Contexts

In this study, the purpose of the initial stage of fieldwork was on-the-ground familiarisation with the context of education in the two countries. However, the necessarily short period of time I was able to spend in each setting - approximately six weeks in total in each country - has meant that there has also been a heavy reliance on both primary and secondary printed sources which could be accessed in the UK. Both South Africa and Russia have attracted a great deal of interest from comparative and international education, because of the nature of the changes in these countries and because of their international significance; there is no shortage of books and articles, and international journals have devoted whole editions to the educational changes in these nations.

The establishment of democratic governments in Russia and South Africa followed a series of significant political movements and changes which cleared the way for elections and the dismantling of the previous regimes. In South Africa, in 1948 the National Party acquired power through a vote restricted to the white population, and then introduced formal apartheid, which governed and racially segregated virtually all aspects of life including the right to abode, to work, and to marry. Struggles against the apartheid state persisted throughout nearly half a century, often violently, with members of the African National Congress playing key roles in the protests and sabotage against the mechanisms of the state. In 1990, F W DeKlerk opened the door to reform through such moves as the unbanning of the ANC. The first elections took

place in 1994, with the ANC winning a clear majority. Other parties, such as the ethnically-based rivals to the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party along with the National Party, captured a significant portion of the vote and have shared power in the period of transition. The ANC has since be re-elected, with Thabo Mbeki as president. In Russia, the Communists had held power since 1917, with leadership styles which ranged from the ideologues of the early years, through the autocracy of Stalin in the 1930s, to the 'openness' of Gorbachev's regime in the late 1980s. 1991 saw Borin Yeltsin leading the coup against Gorbachev, in a bid to hasten democratic reform. The dissolution of the Soviet Union took place at the end of the year, breaking the USSR into independent states, including the Russian Republic. Yeltsin was re-elected to the presidency in 1996.

These political changes and the establishment of representative democracy in these two countries form the backdrop to this study. Since 'change' and 'education' are the large themes under which this study was conducted, the nature of reforms to educational policy since the first elections will be outlined, as they have affected compulsory schooling. Since the responses of teachers to the changes is the focus of this research, their training and working conditions will also be described. All of these structural, curricular, pedagogical, and ultimately cultural reforms reflect changes in the wider society. These topics are also 'moving targets': it was very challenging to write about situations which have constantly been in flux, right up to the time of submission of this thesis.

It should be noted here that in neither country is the rhetoric about 'reform'. In South Africa, the misuse of the word and concept of 'reform' under the

apartheid regime has prompted the appropriation of the term 'transformation' (Enslin and Pendlebury 1998), and South African academics at conference presentations have objected to my use of the word 'reform'. In Russia, while national-level legislation is accepted as reform, the discussion tends to centre on the concept of 'innovation', especially at the level of the classroom, indicating the importance attributed to local movements. As Webber and Webber (1994) put it: "...the educational authorities in Russia today have to accept the fact that, by the time they assumed responsibility for the direction of education in Russia following the demise of the Soviet Union, the impulse for change in education had already passed to the grassroots..." (Webber and Webber 1994:232). Where the term reform is used here, its functional definition as a major legislated change to policy is intended.

In this chapter, we will begin by situating this study within the field of comparative education, and the following section provides a very brief overview of some of the purposes and methods of comparative education. This sets the background for the analyses of policy in the two countries by raising methodological issues regarding cross-national studies and the comparative perspective, including some of the potential problems of sources and approaches. Subsequently, the major shifts in education that came at the end of the apartheid era in South Africa and the communist regime in Russia, and some of the attendant problems with them, will be outlined. These overviews will include both changes which were legislated, and those which have come as a direct or indirect consequence of the policy reforms. The reforms will be considered in a critical way, and some of the constraints assessed which might have impeded their successful implementation. The changes in each country

will be related briefly to Bishop's (1986) conditions of success for educational reform and innovation. Finally, comparisons and contrasts between the two national contexts and their education policy agendas will be considered.

Comparative Education Studies

The cross-national or cross-cultural comparison of education systems and practices has a long history. It also has rich potential for increasing understanding of issues in education. Conducted sensitively, it can be anti-parochial, by revealing the breadth and depth of educational possibility, and can lead to "...international co-operation, understanding and exchange" (Fraser and Brickman 1968 in Crossley and Broadfoot 1992). Understanding of education in a nation can reveal a great deal about the culture and priorities of that country, and in an ever-shrinking world, it is essential to understand as much about as many as possible.

At the turn of the last century, Michael Sadler made the following observation concerning the purposes of comparative education:

The practical value of studying, in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and to understand our own. (in Higginson 1979:50).

In the same way that we make the strange familiar, we 'make the familiar strange' (Crossley and Broadfoot 1992), thereby seeing it with a new perspective. This perspective arises from having a repertoire of knowledge of systems and customs. In seeking out commonalities and differences among them, it is possible, some believe, to formulate generalisations about education: a sort of trans-national educational truth. Donald Schön, in *The Reflective*

Practitioner, points to the potential of ‘repertoire-building research’ to increase the effectiveness of the professional’s processing of analysing and responding to complex situations; applied here, a multi-faceted international education perspective may inform the ‘intuitive’ understanding of issues. Among the areas that may be illuminated by carefully- and sensitively-conducted comparative study is the nature of the link between society and education: which social patterns lead to the evolution of certain systems of schooling, and vice versa: questions which have been pondered in a comparative way by macrosociologists such as Margaret Archer (1984) and Andy Green (1990). Finally there are those who believe that these understandings gleaned from examination of policy and practice in education in other countries can be put to good use (see, for example, King 1979). By showing alternatives and their possible outcomes, comparative education research can ‘tutor our judgement’ (Stenhouse in Crossley and Vulliamy 1984); informing policy decisions, guiding and predicting based on the patterns observed elsewhere. I would suggest that this particular study may have such potential, as it provides

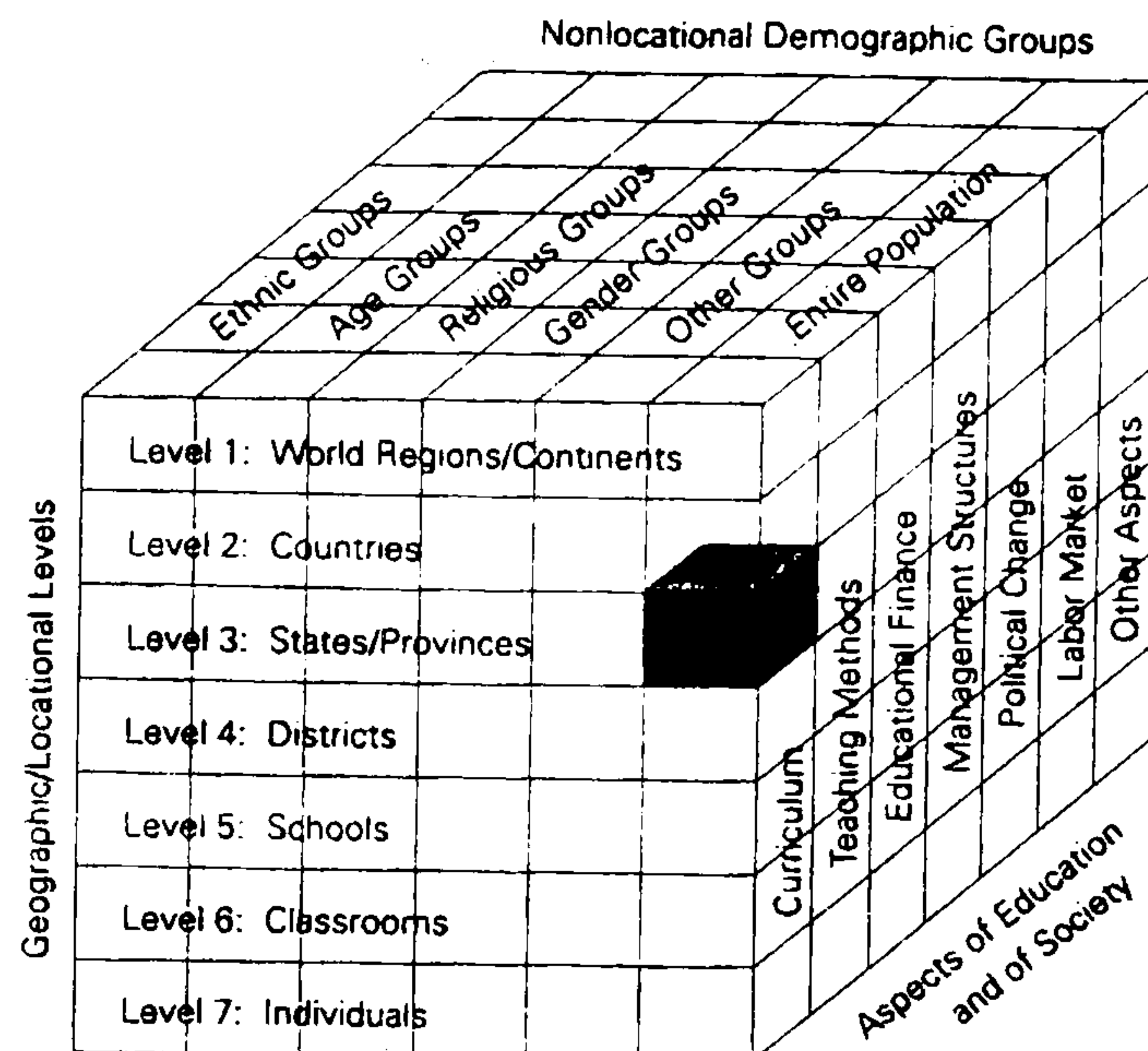
...case-studies of the internal dynamics of education systems and how these influence the idiosyncratic effects of educational practices in any particular context. By so doing...policy-makers could be provided with guidance as to the likely outcomes of any particular innovation (Broadfoot 1999:21).

The national context of education has received so much attention from comparative and international educationalists that acknowledging its importance might be considered one of the first principles of the field of inquiry. Michael Sadler’s statement has become something of an adage: “In studying foreign systems of Education we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside” (in Higginson 1979:49). In exploring how

comparativists should approach the study of the national context, some have stressed the importance of the researcher's familiarity with the country, suggesting that intimate understanding of the culture and high levels of linguistic fluency are essential to area or comparative studies of education: what Brock (1988) terms the 'traditionalist' school of comparative education. Others have attempted systematically to analyse the components of nationhood and culture, and to schematise their relationship to education (Hans 1951; Mallinson 1975). By way of contrast, still others have noted the problematics of such levels of understanding in the analysis of other systems of education, acknowledging ethnocentrism as something which must be controlled for, but which cannot ever be completely overcome (King 1979). Considering these limitations, a sensitive comparative perspective, developed across a range of contexts, can become almost as important as in-depth knowledge of a given country (Fry and Thurber 1989) or at least becomes a vital complement to it.

But while the national context is the level at which most comparativists operate, it is not the only potential one; yet other sites of education policy and practice have been under-explored (Brock 1988, Schweisfurth 1995). The nation state is not always the best unit to consider, as variations within a given country can be as important as national patterns. Bray and Thomas (1996) systematically schematise potential comparisons at different levels of a given system, providing the following diagrammatic overview:

A Framework for Comparative Education Analyses



The study at hand is unusual in its focus on individuals in two different national settings: the smallest unit in Bray and Thomas' scheme. The classroom level and its processes have been under-represented in comparative research (Schweisfurth 1996, Alexander 1999). However, the national, regional and school contexts can help to explain why individuals have responded as they have. Additionally, similarities and differences in individual's responses may help to reveal which influences and perspectives might be universal, which could be considered to arise out of a given context, and which are unique to individuals. This difficult unpacking of the 'macro-micro problem' (Alexander 1999) is one of the aims of this research.

Clearly there is much scope for use of comparative studies in education; however, there are a number of levels at which data for comparison across contexts can be problematic (some of these issues have also been explored in Schweisfurth 1996). Much research relies on data gathered in-country, which may be fraught by problems of sampling, and which may have been aggregated inappropriately. These problems certainly pertain to the data available from Russia and South Africa. As Motala (1995) points out, in South Africa, records

are very poor. Statistics have often been manipulated, and therefore can only be used as indicators. Very few reliable studies exist, and records are often unsystematic, lost, incorrect, incomplete, or unverifiable. Efforts to gather current data are thwarted by instability in schools and by mistrust of researchers, especially outsiders. In Russia under communism, manipulating statistics was far from unusual practice (Sutherland 1999). The appearance of compliance, productivity and success was important both within the country to satisfy authorities and the masses, and for external consumption, to save the international face of communism. Today there is still little available that is reliable and officials are taxed to make decisions on the basis of inadequate information (Webber 2000).

Language has also been posited as a difficult issue which requires constant compromising of meaning when used cross culturally, even when a shared language is used (Preston cited in Schweisfurth 1999a). In this study, my severely limited command of Russian language made it nearly impossible to access first-hand the rich variety of Russian commentary on their own system and the reforms. The quantity of articles in journals and newspapers is large and they are widely influential, but this study has had to rely on translations, or Russians writing in English (such as Nikandrov or Dneprov, both of whom are political figures), or on the informed commentary of bilingual outsiders. I therefore am inevitably less attuned to the situation, or at least less able to make independent analyses, certainly of primary documents, although comparative the analysis of the points of view of different commentators have certainly helped to build a picture. However, language is not the only cross-cultural issue, and speaking a *lingua franca* of South Africa has not guaranteed mutual

understanding. Significant concepts, such as what it means to *manage*, or to *reform*, often confound comparisons as they do not travel adequately across cultures (Reynolds 1999; Shaw and Welton 2000). Ethnocentrism also has tremendous powers of distortion, at any stage of the research process. These issues as they relate to the field work for this study will be explored further in the methodology and findings chapters.

With the above considerations and caveats in mind, the following sections critically examine education in the national contexts of South Africa and Russia.

South Africa

The policy of apartheid created a deep and lasting wound in my country and my people. All of us will spend many years, if not generations, recovering from that profound hurt. (Mandela 1994:748)

Administration, Funding and Structure of Education

Under apartheid, following the recommendations of the De Lange Report in 1981, education was treated largely as an 'own affairs' issue, and was administered through the racially-segregated representative houses for white, Indian and coloured people. Education for the black majority, who had no representative body in government, was under central management, clustered together with defense and health. There were 19 education departments in all. Private education was the responsibility of the parents, governing bodies and sponsors who established individual schools. (Sedibe 1998, Christie 1996, Harber 1997).

Between the different departments, and *ipso facto*, between racial groups, there were enormous inequalities in terms of per pupil expenditure, although the

relative spending per black child did increase in the era leading up to the dismantling of apartheid. The following table illustrates:

Educational Expenditure per Child for Different Groups

<i>Year</i>	<i>Group</i>			
	Africans	Coloureds	Indians	Whites
1984	R234	R569	R1088	R1654
1989	R927	R2115	R2645	R3575
1991	R930	R1983	R2659	R3739
1993	R1659	R2902	R3702	R4372

(R = South African Rand)
(Nkabinde 1997:44)

These inequalities were compounded by many factors, including the lack of free compulsory education for the impoverished black population; extremely poor, and often overcrowded facilities (most rural and township schools lacked basic furniture, access to water and electricity); significantly higher pupil-teacher ratios and class sizes in black schools; and underqualified teachers. Many rural areas were (and are) particularly poor, and for many black children in farming communities, access to education was far from automatic (Kallaway 1997).

This poverty and these inequalities are reflected in national indicators. For example, while 85% of urban dwellers have access to adequate sanitation, only 12% of the rural population does. Per capita GNP places South Africa among middle-income countries, but essentially this 'average' is a meaningless blend of extremes; education indicators mask a wide diversity as well. There is evidence that the end of apartheid has brought a slight decline in GNP (UNICEF 1999).

The structure of the education system is now the same for all racial groups, and has grounding in the National Qualifications Framework. This framework was created to improve the coherence of courses and portability across different

parts of the education and training system - a coherence which did not exist under apartheid, restricting mobility and progression. It also allows for the accreditation of prior learning (Harber 2000). All of these benefits are very important in the context of redressing the imbalances of apartheid.

In terms of types of schools, until 1990 all schools were either public or private. All state schools were racially segregated. In the early 1990's, a set of models of schools was developed to allow for changes in historically white schools, many of which were underutilised. As a result, many became state-aided schools, and started to admit students of colour (Sedibe 1998). Others took the opportunity of this decentralisation move to entrench school policies which allowed them to continue racist admission practices. In 1991, the government's Education Renewal Strategy was published, which was "an attempt to move away from apartheid education (which)..was criticised for its vague recommendations about the governance and administration of the education system and its silence about issues of class, race, religion, gender and inequalities in education" (Sedibe 1998:270-271). It was, however, a signal that the status quo could not continue.

Violent opposition continued, and combined with international pressure to share power, put the apartheid government in what even they had to admit was an untenable position. In the period following the unbanning of the ANC and Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990, the ANC started preparing its strategy for education, and prior to the elections, it published *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*. The paper was based on wide consultation, and a process of National Education Policy Investigation (Sedibe 1998).

Following the democratic election of an ANC government in 1994, the government's *White Paper on Education and Training* was published in March 1995, followed by a second White Paper in 1996. In it was outlined the ANC's philosophy on education, as well as plans for restructuring of the system and access to education. Among the most basic reforms enshrined in it were the rights for all citizens to basic education, equal access to education institutions, choice of language of instruction (where practicable), and the right to establish schools on the basis of culture, language or religion, but not race (Department of Education 1995). Among the key structural changes proposed (or reinforced) in the first White Paper were the following: the granting of official status to 11 national languages; a process of administrative rationalisation, including of the 19 departments of education; and the development of a National Qualifications Framework, in consultation with labour organisations. This paper also made clear the government's commitment to a new philosophy of education, and linked education clearly to democratic values:

It should be a goal of education and training policy to enable a democratic, free, equal, just and peaceful society to take root and prosper in our land...by promoting the values underlying democratic processes and the charter of fundamental rights, the importance of due process of law and exercise of civic responsibility...The curriculum, teaching methods and textbooks...should encourage independent and critical thought, the capacity to question, enquire, reason, weigh evidence and form judgments, achieve understanding, recognise the provisional nature of most human knowledge and communicate clearly. (Department of Education 1995:22)

The second White Paper additionally re-established the system of state and independent schools, provided for the establishment of school governing bodies in all schools, and recommended the use of a sliding scale for school fees (Department of Education 1996). The powers of these governing bodies, as enshrined in the Schools Act shortly afterwards, include the right to determine

language and student conduct policies for schools. The same act also made education compulsory from age seven to fifteen, and established student representative bodies at secondary level (Sedibe 1998).

One of the most significant and controversial aspects of the restructuring of education was the process of 'rightsizing', which sought to redress some of the imbalances in funding, and particularly in class size. The process involved offering packages to teachers to encourage them to retire from the profession. Then, through adjustments to funding, it attempted to reduce staff in overstaffed schools, and to give schools with very high pupil:teacher ratios the opportunity to employ more teachers. The ratios were set nationally at 1:40 in primary schools, and 1:35 in secondary schools. The results of the process were chaotic - more teachers than anticipated accepted the severance package, costing the government over 1 billion rand - nearly twice the amount expected. The apparently simple mathematical solution to the problem of ratio disparities has been foiled by the complexities of the issue, and the process has been fraught with difficulties and only marginally successful. (Motala 1997).

Spending on education since the end of apartheid has been relatively high in comparison with other countries: 7.9% of GNP in 1996 (World Bank 2000) It has also grown substantially from 21.9% of the budget in 1988/89 to about 28% in 1998/99 (Harber 2000). However, considering the daunting levels of inequality and the needs and demands of all constituencies, it seems impossible to spend adequately.

Educational Culture

Exacerbating and made worse by the developing world education conditions existing under apartheid, particularly in black schools, was what has been referred to as the 'collapse of a culture of learning and teaching', with sporadic attendance by both students and staff, apathetic teachers and administration, and a culture of violence which includes rape, gangsterism and drug abuse (Chisholm and Vally 1996, Moyo 1997). As Christie puts it:

Principals, teachers and students have lost focus and have directed their energies towards the malfunctioning of the institution, at the expense of substantive learning and teaching. The breakdown in schools is in part at least a breakdown of rhythmical, disciplined learning and teaching - the ostensible, conscious goal of the work group. (Christie 1998:293)

The word 'collapse' suggests that a culture conducive to effective teaching and learning once existed - a problematic assumption given that apartheid had, since the introduction of Bantu Education in 1954, undermined opportunities for black people to achieve a meaningful education. Bantu education has been described as

...a deliberately inferior form of basic education that trained blacks exclusively for employment in menial, low-wage positions in a racially structured economy. The limitation of Bantu education had the potential of making blacks feel inadequate and incompetent compared to other people...such education was intended to silence the voice of government opponents, and it was geared to provide certain skills commensurate with the needs of industry (Nkabinde 1997:6).

Its implicit aim was to socialise black students into accepting the apartheid status quo: "The apartheid regime was trying to use the township school to co-opt individuals and cool-out resistance" (Chisholm and Fuller 1996) In this it failed. Schools became sites of struggle during the later years of apartheid, after the ANC renounced its original goals of peaceful protest and began to advocate violent opposition to the regime. Strikes were common, and the original goals

of political advocacy and support for the opponents of apartheid were often lost in the general decline in morale and order. This decline has largely persisted despite the end of apartheid, and the need to 'restore' the culture has become a paramount issue in the South African debate on schooling.

Christie's (1997) interesting study of a sample of schools where the culture of teaching and learning has remained stable 'against the odds' points to a number of common features of these schools, such as flexible leadership, a focus on teaching and learning, consistent and legitimised disciplinary procedures, and a 'culture of concern'. What many of these features have in common is that they indicate a level of inner cohesion and independence: "...with schools drawing more from relationships close to their boundaries than from more distant sources such as state education departments" (Christie 1997:4). This would suggest that central efforts to deal with the problem of breakdown have been relatively ineffectual; the 'resilient' schools have as many environmental problems to deal with as 'dysfunctional' schools, but they have themselves taken responsibility to cope with them.

Teachers and Pedagogy

Under apartheid, black teachers learned to subvert to survive. However, this subversion was often not a constructive effort, and as Motala notes, "very few perceived themselves as agents of change" (1995:170). During the apartheid years, teachers' lack of active engagement with their responsibilities worked in some ways in favour of the government's anti-emancipatory agenda. However, the reforms have dramatically increased demands on teachers' capacities to work actively and creatively. Their roles have been redefined; instead of

reproducing passive cogs of the apartheid machine, they are meant to be educating a dynamic and critical young citizenry (Kahn 1996).

In these new roles, and the ensuing differences in practice and relationships with students which ensue, the question of capacity is critical, and varies among different racial groups. Among white teachers, for example, the ability to effectively implement multi-cultural or especially anti-racist approaches is needed, but the tendency in desegregated schools, even where resistance to mixed-race schooling has not been a problem, has been towards assimilation – expecting the non-white students to adapt to the conditions already existing in the schools (Penny *et al* 1993; Shalem 1992). This approach has led to racial tension, and a systemic failure to engage with the problems of integration; teachers have felt ill-equipped to deal with these issues (Enslin and Pendlebury 1998; Harber 2000). For black teachers, the problem of capacity stems from the educational culture through which they have been taught, and a sustained period of resource deprivation; for many of them, the concepts of active learning and reflective practice are not part of their teaching culture (Jessop and Penny 1998) and they have had little support in coming to grips with these new and complex ideas. As one report notes: “The vast majority of teachers appear not to understand the notion of outcomes-based education and the National Qualifications Framework” (Govender *et al* 1997). Several studies have indicated that didactic teaching methodologies and authoritarian relationships prevail, even in situations where the culture of learning and teaching has remained relatively resilient. (see, for example, Motala 1995 and Gauteng Department of Education 1997). Corporal punishment continues to be a widespread practice (Gauteng Department of Education 1997, Morrell 1998).

Harber attributes the tendency of teachers to continue to use traditional methods, and the problem of capacity to address this issue, to three major factors. Firstly, many black teachers are untrained. Secondly, those who are trained have, for the most part, received what might be termed teacher 'training' rather than teacher 'education'; the didactic methods which many experience in schools are equally prevalent in teacher training institutions. Even sessions on child-centred learning are likely to be delivered in lecture mode. Thirdly, long before they reach teacher training, future teachers are already steeped in traditional views of knowledge and methods of teaching and learning from their own primary and secondary classroom experiences. Such habituated ways of teaching and learning are reinforced by cultural values regarding received wisdom and respect for elders. Finally, salaries and teaching conditions breed a narrow professionalism (Harber 1997). It is true that salaries have improved, for black teachers in particular. However, many schools remain extremely resource-poor, making the development of a repertoire of new teaching strategies highly problematic. It would also appear that there is a morale and recruitment crisis, probably reflecting the perceived low status of teaching, testified by the number of teachers accepting the government's severance package offer, and the fact that the fastest-growing group of teachers is young, black, unqualified females (Govender *et al* 1997).

To what extent have teachers had an active role in the development of policy and curricula since the establishment of legitimate government? Despite the ANC's rhetoric of consultation and participation, commentators point to the "state-driven nature of the curriculum development process...while an INSET

programme on these issues is necessary, it is problematic that teachers are merely being informed of the changes, rather than being involved in producing them” (Govender *et al* 1997). This apparent lack of consultation with this constituency (Christie 1997) is especially ironic, given the roots of the ANC, their vocal commitment to democratic processes, and the emancipatory discourse so eloquently embodied in the White Papers.

Reports on the effectiveness of recent INSET programmes are contradictory - some say the programmes are superficial and ineffective, others say that they are becoming much more supported and supportive (Motala 1997).

Curriculum 2005 – Outcomes-Based Education

Prior to the reforms introduced by the ANC government, there was no national curriculum. Curricula were developed for use in white schools, and these were adapted for use by other departments. The curriculum was academically-oriented. Approved textbooks revealed a perspective on history which was very much from the point of view of whites, with a focus on the colonising of South Africa by Afrikaner and British powers. The expansion of these empires, and the ensuing battles with indigenous people, were told as tales of heroism, particularly of the Boer trekkers. The taught curriculum changed little in the final decade of apartheid (Motala 1995).

Outcomes-based Education (OBE), an idea originating in New Zealand (with roots sometimes traced back to behavioural psychology), was introduced to try to combat the content-based and pacifying curricula generally associated with apartheid education. “The focus in OBE is on clearly defined outcomes of the

learning process, rather than on teacher input in terms of the content of the syllabus" (Greenstein 1997), and continuous assessment is intended to replace the summative examinations which formerly shaped much curricular content. Therefore, while branded a 'curriculum', it should have major effects on pedagogy, assessment, and teacher-student relationships. Ostensibly, a focus on outcomes should "...displace an emphasis on content coverage...", "...make explicit what learners should attend to...", "...direct assessment towards specified goals...", "...signal what is worth learning in a content-heavy curriculum..." and provide "...a measure of accountability...a means of evaluating the quality and impact of teaching..." (Jansen 1998).

The reaction to OBE has been mixed. On the one hand, "the critical outcomes do reflect a commitment to pupil-centred learning that is problem-focused rather than content based" (Govender *et al* 1997). Originally, the discourse around OBE hailed it as the solution to many problems in education, particularly around classroom practice:

The media hype created the impression that decades of training in and practice of a particular mode of teaching, and deeply entrenched notions of what could and should be expected by learners, teachers and parents in classroom situations, have been overturned by the mere fact that a commission of experts and officials has called for the introduction of a new teaching methodology. (Greenstein 1997).

However, there has been considerable criticism of the curriculum and the timetable and strategies for implementation. Jansen (1998) offers a particularly cogent and strongly-stated analysis of the problems of OBE:

My thesis is that OBE will fail, not because politicians and bureaucrats are misinformed about conditions of South African schooling, but because this policy is being driven in the first place by political imperatives which have little to do with the realities of classroom life. Rather than spawn innovation, OBE will in fact undermine the already

fragile learning environment in schools and classrooms of the new South Africa (Jansen 1998:323).

The ten reasons that Jansen argues make the failure of OBE inevitable are worth summarising here, as they encompass many of the arguments made by other academics concerning OBE, and the reforms generally.

1. The language of OBE and its associated innovations is "...too complex, confusing and at times contradictory" (p 323). The discourse is constantly shifting, the concepts are constantly re-labelled. This would suggest that teachers' lack of understanding of OBE is not only a capacity issue as suggested above, but a problem of the reform itself. Christie (1997) also emphasises the need for a clearer policy framework.
2. "OBE as curriculum policy is implicated in problematical claims and assumptions about the relationship between curriculum and society" (p 323). Much credence has been given to the policy's potential to encourage economic growth, but "there is not a shred of evidence in almost 80 years of curriculum change literature to suggest that altering the curriculum of schools leads to or is associated with changes in national economies" (p 324). It is also claimed to be able to alter classroom relationships, a claim which Jansen finds misleading oversell. On the other hand, Badat (1995) claims that "a failure to link the educational and political and human resource development with curriculum transformation has resulted in the fracturing of the previously posited objective of 'People's Education for People's Power'" (Badat 1995: 142). Scant attention has been paid overall, according to the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) team, to "...the positive as well as negative lessons that can be derived from the experience of other

countries that had adopted a similar approach to education” (Greenstein 1997).

3. OBE is “...based on flawed assumptions about what happens in schools, how classrooms are organised and what kinds of teachers exist within the system” (p 325). In the hands of underqualified and undereducated teachers, the outcomes are likely to become objectives in “...a mechanical model of behaviourism” (326).
4. “Specifying outcomes in advance might be anti-democratic” (p 326): is it not contradictory to encourage flexible and creative use of knowledge, only to insist on pre-specified learning outcomes? The means of implementation may be equally problematic; Sebakwane (1996) refers to the contradictions of using scientific styles of management to try to bring about allegedly emancipatory reforms.
5. OBE is politically and epistemologically suspect: “there is something fundamentally questionable about a focus on ends as final outcomes when much of the educational and political struggle of the 1980s valued the processes of learning and teaching as ends in themselves” (p 327). Elsewhere, Chisholm and Fuller have noted how new education policies have deviated strongly from the ‘People’s Education’ movement of the pre-government ANC, and the Wits March 1997 report (Govender *et al*) also laments the loss of the radical reform agenda. Unterhalter (1998) and Harber (2000) point to a neo-liberal economic agenda as usurper of the loftier goals of the ANC’s stance in unofficial opposition.
6. Despite the imperatives under which it was created, OBE does not face squarely the issue of values in the curriculum. The very few explicit value statements (such as “display constructive attitudes”) Jansen describes as

“bland and decontextualised global statements” (p 327). As the Wits team point out elsewhere: “The draft prescribes an unrealistic and ambitious role for materials, stating that they should: promote ‘appropriate identity models’, ‘ideals that are worth striving for’ and ‘peaceful co-existence’. These terms are highly ambiguous and leave wide leeway for interpretation: whose vision determines what identity models are ‘appropriate’? Who prescribes which ideals are worth striving for?” (Govender *et al* 1997)

7. The administrative burden on teachers will be increased, without adequate support, and is therefore likely to be resisted.
8. Curriculum content is trivialised. As Jansen puts it: ‘content matters’ (p 328); another commentator has expressed concern about “the undermining of content for the sake of vague and difficult to measure outcomes” (Greenstein 1997). These content vacuums could potentially be filled with, for example, Afrikaner nationalism, or, equally, militant Africanism. OBE is also said to fragment knowledge, and to assume a linear progression in learning.
9. The success of OBE rests on the simultaneous implementation of several interdependent innovations in, for example, assessment, classroom organisation, and learning resources, yet “there is neither the fiscal base nor the political will to intervene in the education system at this level of intensity” (p 329). Even the basic sustaining of the education system is under threat: “Quantitative delivery of educational opportunities, especially for the poorest families, and qualitative advance in education effectiveness, are severely threatened by the budget crisis in provincial education...personnel expenditure totally dominates education expenditure and undermines the ability to provide resources to address backlogs...”

(Chisholm 1998). Furthermore, innovations are most likely to be successful and sustainable in well-resourced schools, a situation which is likely to exacerbate inequalities (Greenstein 1997). The problem of the very tight time frame within which these multi-faceted changes are to be implemented is also a serious issue (Govender *et al* 1997), and the government has twice been forced to move deadlines for implementation forward to more realistic goals.

10. There is an inherent contradiction in the co-existence of OBE and the matriculation examination. As long as the results of traditional examinations continue to have status, they will play the greater role in shaping teaching and learning.

There is considerable evidence that the process of implementation has been highly problematic (see, for example, Harber 2000), suggesting that at least some of the flaws highlighted in Jansen's analysis have contributed to thwarting the process. In fact, as the finishing touches are being put on this thesis, a major review of OBE is being undertaken, which has confirmed that implementation of the curriculum has been confounded on a number of key fronts. The review team has found that while there is widespread support for the curriculum, it has not proved feasible because of such issues as its complexity, inadequate teacher support and training, and a shortage of resources. As a consequence, it is having the opposite effect to what was intended for disadvantaged groups. The curriculum is likely to be overhauled in favour of one which is clearer and more streamlined and which focuses on 'the three Rs' (Times Education Supplement 23/6/2000).

Conclusion

The changes in educational policy introduced by the ANC government since their election have been substantial, and, at least at the level of discourse, they have been predicated on a desire to redress the imbalances of the apartheid era, and to educate for democratic citizenship. However, they have been thwarted in implementation by a number of factors. In Bishop's (1986) terms, the policy innovations are challenged in intrinsic, situational, environmental, material and organisational, and ideological terms.

Intrinsically, there are questions about how appropriate and clear are the purposes of OBE. Its complexity and its lack of communicability have also been highlighted. It was piloted to a degree, and has been forced to be introduced gradually, but there are many who feel that this testing stage was not comprehensive enough, nor that appropriate levels of feedback have been gathered and used to rectify problems that exist.

The situation into which these changes have been introduced suffers from problems of financial and human professional capacity, extreme imbalances in resources and power, and incompatibility with users' previous experiences. The 'breakdown' of the culture of teaching and learning has created a situation in schools where issues of basic survival take precedence over difficult-to-implement changes. The wider environment is also problematic: violence is a pressing issue, and the deep-rooted racism, tribalism and sexism which permeate South African society are profound challenges to the emancipatory and democratic aims of the changes. The AIDS epidemic also threatens the teaching profession and the welfare of children.

Despite a relatively high expenditure on education which continues to grow, resource shortages and disparities are a serious impediment to effective change. And, ideologically, there are both those such as Jansen who question the finer points of the movement's ideology, lamenting the fragmentation and disenfranchising of the radical agenda, and those such as the powerful conservative white minority who have been opposed to change from the outset. Considering these challenges, it is not surprising that the evidence suggests that the hold of the reforms in the majority of schools is tenuous at best – non-existent, or even counter-productive, at worst. One cannot help but feel that this is an unfortunate situation, as despite its many flaws, the education reform process in South Africa has at least been a well-meaning attempt to tackle the pernicious legacy of apartheid.

Russia

Like all empires, the Soviet Empire was based on coercion, and broke up when it lost the will and means to coerce its subjects. (Skidelsky 1995:95)

Administration and funding of schooling

Despite the end of empire and the decline (if not death) of communism, the educational legacy of the Soviet period remains substantial in the 'New Russia'. In the history of the USSR since Stalin's rule in the 1930s and 1940s, while there were periods of reform, and very significant grassroots movements in pedagogical innovation, the administration and funding of education remained 'hyper-centralised' (Webber 2000). In terms of funding, the system inherited in 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union had suffered decades of neglect. It was funded on the 'leftover principle': schooling was given lower priority in central budgets than other sectors, defence in particular. In the 70's

approximately 7% of GNP was spent on education; this declined substantially due to financial crises in the post-Soviet era, as a percentage, and even more dramatically, in real expenditure terms (World Bank 1995). 4.1% of GNP was spent on education in 1996, well below the international average (World Bank 2000). Because of a lack of adequate building policies in the Soviet era, there is a shortage of schools, with many schools having more than 2000 students, often operating multiple shifts to accommodate them all. Many schools then and now have very poor basic facilities: in 1991-2, 38% of schools were without running water, 29% were without central heating, and 49% did not have indoor toilets (Sutherland 1999). Despite rigid centralisation and supposed equality among all schools in the country, this lack of investment was not experienced in an equitable way, with schools in rural communities - 75% of all schools (Jones 1994) - suffering the most, and with compulsory schooling being relatively underfunded compared to other sectors of the economy (World Bank 1995). In reality, the Soviet regime's claim of equality of opportunity and the impression of uniformity which was created were, at least in part, false; by the time this was being more openly acknowledged in the post-*perestroika* era, the introduction of market forces into the schooling system was making these inequalities much worse (Jones 1994).

These stringencies and inequalities reflect similar patterns in society generally, as a number of indicators show. Since the end of communism, there has been an average 5% decline in annual GNP, placing it among such low middle-income countries as Peru and Namibia, and there are very high rates of inflation. There has been a significant decline in life expectancy (from 69 to 64 years 1970 - 1996); this decline is particularly true for men (UNICEF 1999).

Poverty and instability are facts of life. As the editor of *Granta's* special edition on Russia (1998) put it, in commenting on the post-communist social and economic reforms in an embellished but probably not exaggerated way:

'Reform' is the word that the West has attached, optimistically, to Russia's new condition, in which taxes and wages go unpaid, gross domestic product and life-expectancy decline, the rouble crashes and inflation (in 1998) runs at 200 per cent; where fear of the state and its laws has been replaced by corruption, crime and ruthless self-interest - 'bandit capitalism'. These are...not so much unfortunate by-products of 'reform' as the phenomena at the very heart of it. If the Russian people were not so soured, confused and exhausted by their experience of ideology, one might be tempted to say that, once again, they looked ripe for revolution. (Jacks 1998:7)

On the other hand, other commentators have stressed the stoicism and resilience of the Russian people in the face of these hardships, and their perseverance in maintaining stability and standards in schooling despite these challenges (O'Brien 2000, for example).

In terms of the structure of education administration, in 1988, there were three national ministries responsible for education: the USSR Ministry of Education, the USSR Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education, and the USSR State Committee for Vocational-Technical Education. These structures were complex and highly bureaucratic; the higher education sector, for example, was managed vertically by 21 different sectoral ministries, each institution segmented from the others in key ways (World Bank 1995) and this complicated organisational structures continue to create difficulties. These ministries were merged to form the State Public Education Committee of the USSR, which did not receive ministry status until 1993 (Jones 1994). This merger involved a number of reshuffles, although many of the key players remained the same, making radical responses to the post-Soviet democratic changes unlikely to be

generated quickly (Jones 1994). Since the 1992 Law on Education, the succession of ministers has generally remained faithful to its basic tenets, offering a probably helpful degree of continuity (Webber 2000) at the centre of change.

Early moves towards decentralisation were made in the *glasnost* era, both by the central government and the regions, cities and schools. By the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1992:

...the Russian reformers were left with little option but to decentralise, so great was the apparent clamour of the regions to receive responsibility for managing the schools in their area, although such enthusiasm was matched by the centre's willingness to relinquish control. (Webber 2000:24)

The 1992 Law on Education had decentralisation and regionalisation as two of its major tenets. Responsibility for administration (and some aspects of curriculum) was devolved to regional and republican levels, to municipal and district councils, and to the schools themselves. The structures themselves have changed little since Soviet times, but the distribution of power and responsibility has altered significantly (Gazman 1995; Lenskaya 1995; Bucar and Eklof 1998). By 1994, 87% of funds for education came from regional budgets. Schools have a far greater responsibility for the management of their own budgets than previously; in this period of financial uncertainty and severe constraint, many schools have turned to alternative sources of funding, such as the leasing of school premises, soliciting funds from business, or resorting to charging fees (technically illegal for state schools) to make ends meet.

From the perspective of the World Bank (1995) – unsurprisingly, given its economic agenda – most of the challenges facing the new Russia in the early

years of democratic transition were, in fact, structural and financial. The report *Education in the Transition* cites the following external challenges to the education sector:

...the economic turmoil associated with the transition to a market economy which has been manifested in very high rates of inflation...;federal/regional fiscal relations in which the sources of educational finance have been destabilised; and rapid obsolescence of educational programmes originally designed to produce skills required for a closed, centrally-planned economy but not required today. (World Bank 1995:vii)

Many of the internal challenges are also perceived from a structure and finance point of view:

...structures in higher education and compulsory education ill-suited for the new demands of a market economy...decline, inadequacy, and instability of education finance...absence of monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms....new pressures towards education inequalities...vertical organisation has reinforced pedagogical and curricular stagnation and hampered innovation (World Bank 1995:vii - viii)

Despite the strain of financial challenges, participation in and access to education remain very high, as do literacy rates (UNICEF 1999).

Reform Implementation

Like its South African counterpart, the reform movement as a whole in Russia was complex, ambitious, and consistently unclear to most of the major players involved in its implementation. The result has been patchy implementation, which is difficult to assess from within or outside of schools, and many who feel that they have adequately taken on board the changes have simply not understood what was expected. Webber is worth quoting at length on this issue:

...a good deal of confusion surrounded the reform agenda. In the case of some schools, this contributed to the problem of over-experimentation, while in others, a strategy of coping was employed, as schools and teachers paid lip-service to the task of implementation. A considerable amount of adaptation of the reform aims was observed, therefore, with a wide spectrum of variation in the approaches taken to change, and the interpretations placed on the policies of reform...The aims laid before the Russian school in the Law on Education of 1992 were so ambitious, and the system so ill-prepared to make this transition, that had the reform aims been taken up in an 'undiluted' form by the schools I suggest that there would have been severe disruption, great confusion and considerable discontent among teachers, pupils and parents. Instead, through the adaptation of the reform ideas, and the imposition of existing values on the concepts included in the reform agenda, many teachers were able to accept them as notions that did not threaten fundamentally to alter the values which teachers had held throughout their careers. The adoption of this diluted version of the agenda allowed schools to suppose that their capacity to implement these changes was adequate to the task... (Webber 2000:114).

Similar confusion has reigned over the changes to the financing of education.

According to the World Bank, in 1994 only 30% of school directors knew which level of government was financing their schools (1995).

In the light of this confusion, how much has actually changed in Russian schools? Most commentators would argue that implementation of the reform agenda has been patchy at best, and that little has actually changed, particularly in terms of pedagogy, and even the ideologically-defunct textbooks of the Soviet era are still in wide use (Hufton and Elliot 2000, OECD 1996).

Curriculum

Three major reform agendas have taken place in curriculum. Firstly, many decisions concerning curricular content have been decentralised, with regions and schools having greater flexibility than formerly to cater for the needs of their students, based on loose guidelines. Secondly, the ideological component

which was so prominent in the Soviet curriculum has been removed. Thirdly, the curriculum has been 'humanised'.

In the Soviet system, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (known post-USSR as the Russian Academy of Education) designed the curriculum centrally, guided by party politics. It prescribed all aspects of the curriculum: objectives, time allocations, equipment allocations, and permitted textbooks. The 1992 Law on Education divided the curriculum into three parts: the basic curriculum, which provided guidelines on content and number of hours for all Russian schools; the regional basic curriculum, amount of time specified centrally, and drawn up by the regional education authorities, considering such issues as regional language study; and the school curriculum, drawn up by the school, approved by the School Council, and based on the particular needs of students of that school but maintaining the standards laid down by the basic curriculum (Tkachenko 1995). The relative proportion of these, varying somewhat year by year, is approximately 45%:30%:25% (federal - greatest; school - smallest). These in turn are divided into an invariable 'nucleus' for all children, and a variable part, which caters for individual needs (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 1993). There is also increasing encouragement to develop teaching materials at the local level, although this has in practice proven difficult. There are substantial financial hurdles to the development and acquisition of new materials, and perhaps equally or more significantly, there are psychological and institutional constraints in a system where everyone for years received all materials from the centre (Kerr 1994). One important aspect of the development of regional and local curricula is the potential for the growth of minority language programmes; as in so many countries this is a contentious

issue embracing questions of ethnic and national identity, and tensions are ongoing.

In terms of the content of the curriculum, in Soviet times the indoctrination of students into communist ideology was a primary aim in all subjects:

It has always been accepted in the theory and practice of Soviet education that the moulding of builders of communism begins in the classroom and continues vigorously throughout the whole course of each child's education...The teacher of any subject is, therefore, considered above all else to be an ideological educator. (Tomiak 1986: 12)

Official textbooks – there were no others – were laden with references to the virtues of communist heroes and communist values (Lisovskaya and Karpov 1999). Take, for example, this excerpt from the year 10 secondary school English language textbook from 1986.

Rights and Duties

All progressive people in the world know very well that the Soviet Constitution not only proclaims, but guarantees real rights and freedoms to Soviet citizens. These basic rights are the right to work, to rest, the right to education, and the right to housing. But we must remember not only our rights, but also our duties. The Constitution has articles about the duties, and Soviet people must never forget them.

The duties that the Constitution of the USSR imposes on its citizens are in the interest of all Soviet people. Article 39 of the Constitution, for example, says that we must think not only of our own interests, but also of other citizens' interest and of the interests of the whole country.

Articles 59 to 69 say that every citizen must observe the Constitution of the USSR and Soviet laws, work well, safeguard socialist property, develop friendship and cooperation with peoples of other lands, fight for peace, and safeguard the interests of the Soviet state. (Starkov and Ostrovsky 1986:18 – 19)

Questions on this reading include “What are the basic rights guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution?” and “What duties does the Soviet Constitution impose on Soviet citizens?”, reinforcing as fact the claims of the reading. How these tenets

were actually lived was not open to question. However, the removal of communist indoctrination from the curriculum and textbooks has left an unfilled gap, reflecting wider identity anxieties: "Russian education now finds itself caught up in the national search for a moral foundation for the new society" (Jones 1994:13). Democratic citizenship is an important new skill and value, but the attitudes and skills needed to inspire and inculcate it are in short supply:

Neither teachers nor students have been prepared for life in a democratic, market-based society. The passivity that was encouraged during the Soviet period has left many young people ill prepared to show initiative or to set their own direction in life, and the standardised methods that teachers had to follow have left them unprepared to deal with the diversity of views and skills that students bring to the classroom. (Jones 1994:14)

Nowhere is the imperative for new materials and a new approach more pressing than in the teaching of history; yet there are very few alternative sources from which teachers may '...construct the more critical versions of the past that some of them desire to teach' (Husband 1994:124).

The term 'humanisation' is rather vague, and has had a number of interpretations (Daniels, Lucas and Totterdell 1995). On the one hand, it is a reaction to the hyper-rational perspectives embedded in the Soviet curriculum. Part of the goal of becoming a good Soviet citizen was to have a scientific outlook; this was reflected in the curricular emphasis on maths and science, and in the positivist approaches used in studying social science and arts subjects. It was also a reaction to the strict uniformity and regulation of the highly-demanding Soviet curriculum, which de-emphasised individual needs.

Westbrook (1994), for one, is highly critical of the social alienation experienced in Soviet schools:

Soviet schooling was, for the most part, a dehumanising experience for students, teachers, and (if we consider the emotional cost of maintaining divided loyalties) some directors as well. In testimony to the legacy of the Soviet philosophy of man (sic) as an instrument of the state, Russian students describe the experience of school as, variously 'directed at the destruction of school pupils' individuality', 'a nightmare', and 'boring and common'...(Westbrook 1994: 107)

However, it should be noted that not everyone perceives the Soviet years with such negativity. There is considerable sentimentality among some teachers (see, for example, Schweisfurth 2000) for pre-reform school life, and the version of Soviet schooling described above by Westbrook is at odds with the experiences described by Russians in this study, and with anecdotal evidence from Russians in the UK.

Humanisation was thus associated with greater respect for children's individuality, a cutback in study load, improved teacher-student relations (Dneprov 1995), and a shift to the humanities, from 41 to 50 per cent of the curriculum (Sutherland 1999). The drive to humanisation was led by an influential innovation movement, whose "...major aim was to make education more student-centred and to develop cooperation between teachers and students, and this inevitably meant more flexibility and creativity in dealing with the differing needs and skills of students than was possible under the existing model" (Jones 1994:7). Differentiation of curriculum and types of schools was seen as an important step towards the development of children's individual creative potential (Dunstan 1994). However, this differentiation has at times been manifested in ways which have limited some students' choices

while they have expanded those of others. For example, schools offering specialist curricula, or selective academic schools such as *gymnasia* or *lycées*, are not available to all, and the admission procedures are often neither fair nor transparent. In any case, this new differentiation is not a polarised deviation from an egalitarian ideal which existed under communism. As Jones points out:

Sociological studies of educational attainment from the 1960s onward showed that despite the regime's claim that there was equality of opportunity, the family continued to be an important factor. Not only did the education and occupation of a student's parents have a major effect on progress in school, but many schools came to draw their students from a narrow range of social groups. (Jones 1994:6)

The longstanding debates and shifts of influence between 'differentiators' and 'egalitarians' (Dunstan 1994) are likely to continue to play an important role in shaping the curriculum in Russian schools and the diversity between schools, even while the differentiators currently have the upper hand.

Teachers and Pedagogy

The teaching force in Russia has been characterised in a number of different ways. There is a great deal of professional commitment among teachers – virtually all commentators refer to this aspect of education. The OECD (1997), for example, has gone so far as to suggest that it is the commitment of teachers which is keeping the entire system from collapse, and similar sentiments have been expressed (albeit slightly less strongly) by The World Bank (1995), Sutherland (1999), and Webber (2000). Professionalism among teachers can be defined in different ways in different cultures (Broadfoot and Osborn 1993), but in comparing Russian and British teachers, one study found that they had similar levels and sources of motivation, including a definition of themselves as professionals by virtue of possessing essential education, knowledge and skills,

and as being entitled to respect and recognition (Poppleton, Gershunsky, Pullin 1994). However – perhaps again like their British counterparts - there is a general feeling that the status of the profession is being eroded. Even in Soviet times, teachers were badly paid and had few benefits, but at that time, the prestige of a career was valued more highly than the financial reward (Adelman 1994). As other, more lucrative jobs gain prominence and status, teaching suffers in comparison. Teachers today are extremely poorly paid, and often salaries do not arrive on time. The fact that there have been few strikes and, generally, minimal disruption to school life, is another testament to the commitment of teachers. One consequence of this reduction in pay and prestige has been the ‘feminisation’ of the profession, as many men have left teaching to seek employment which can better provide a living (Sutherland 1999, Webber 2000). Many graduates of pedagogical institutes have little desire to enter the profession, seeing their training as a form of higher education which may be a useful commodity within other areas of the labour market (Adelman 1994).

Together with the decline in salary and status, for many there has also been a deterioration in working conditions. As many teachers take on extra lessons or whole additional shifts (18 hours) to earn a living, the length of the work week has expanded. Webber (2000) argues that while this constitutes a substantial change to working conditions, British teachers would not find the current hours of a typical Russian teacher to be unreasonable. Additionally, Russian teachers have the support in schools of extra staff such as a team of psychologists. However, combined with the intensification that arises from pressure to innovate, and to do so with a shrinking resource base, there is little doubt that working conditions are a significant source of stress.

Much has also been written about the conservatism of the teaching force, and of the authoritarian and authoritative teaching style which is the norm. Certainly under late communism, the role of the teacher was as 'fulfiller' (direct translation) of the state's programme (Webber 2000). Muckle describes the pedagogy of the time as follows:

...strong emphasis on factual content, a reluctance to admit to controversy or uncertainty on any point, a consequent tendency to reduce aesthetic or what one might call philosophical subjects to a catalogue of stereotyped statements, little consideration of the child as recipient of all this, a strongly formal atmosphere, and stress on classroom rituals which amounts sometimes to turning the lesson into a ceremony. The subject matter most of all and the teacher in second place are firmly in control of all that happens. Children's ideas are accepted if they conform to teacher expectation, but are otherwise rarely explored. (Muckle 1990:104)

The extent to which teachers are responding to the right and encouragement to innovate is difficult to ascertain in such an enormous country, under such shifting conditions, and with such a limited accessible research base, particularly of qualitative research. However, the general view seems to be that conservatism prevails, and that trends in pedagogy have not been affected significantly by the reforms. Obviously, long entrenchment in traditional teaching methods, continuities over decades in the content and delivery of teacher education (Webber and Webber 1994), and the lack of incentive and guidance in changing are possible explanations for this inertia. Additionally, Lenskaya suggests that the original excitement about child-centred pedagogy has worn off, and that interest in and use of such approaches has, if anything, waned (Lenskaya 2000). Webber (2000) also highlights the lack of mobility of the teaching force: it is very common for teachers to teach in the same institution throughout their careers, often the school they attended themselves,

offering little exposure to alternative learning cultures and teaching methods. Additionally, events both during and after communism have bred cynicism about official decrees of all kinds, and there is a tendency for teachers to keep a micro-level perspective on their work – like their counterparts in many countries. Shaw and Welton (2000) have suggested that ‘high power distance’ is an inextricable part of Russian culture, and that educational management styles reflect this, making inevitable formal and authoritarian relationships between supervisors and subordinates – the same may well hold true for teaching. Kerr (1994) too suggests that there is a persistent link between cultural norms in relationships and modes of schooling: “There is still a hesitancy to trust processes that have never been strong points of the Russian cultural tradition, and so open debate, respect for opponents’ positions, and the ability to judge a person on merit do not come easily” (p 70). While cultural determinism can be dangerous, one cannot help but notice the top-down tendency of such relationships in many spheres of Russian life, and the view of knowledge as authoritative. However, as Webber (2000) argues, someone educated in the UK in the 1950s would probably not find the formal and distant nature of relationships in Russian schools to be beyond their own experience. In any case, there have long been backlashes against it, creating one potential source of evolution beyond authoritarianism.

Despite this evidence of conservatism and authoritarianism, there has in fact been a long history of innovation by teachers in Russia. Since before communism, the ideas of a number of key radical pedagogues have at times been very influential. Important periods of innovation include the period immediately preceding the revolution, when Tolstoy, for example, was

championing progressive education among the peasant population (Eklof 1993). The early communist period also saw the development of emancipatory pedagogies among such people as Shatsky (Fradkin 1993), and the ideas of figures such as Dewey were part of the movement in these formative years (Froumin 1995; Adamsky 1995). There was stagnation under Stalin and Brezhnev, but the period leading up to *perestroika* saw another surge in innovation. Under the present conditions, there are pockets of innovation by individuals and groups, such as the renewed interest in the developmental psychology approaches of Vygotsky and Davydov (Kerr 1994, Adamsky 1995, Sutherland 1999), and considerable coverage in the specialist press. How widely influential these movements are is not easy to assess, but there is certainly a great deal of 'lip-service' paid to their importance.

The Culture of Schooling

While it seems unrealistic to generalise about the culture of schooling in a nation as vast as Russia, evidence suggests that the efforts at nation-wide uniformity in the Soviet era have left a legacy of culture of learning and teaching which seems surprisingly consistent across much of the country. Important differences lie between regions, and between rural and urban and ordinary and selective schools within regions, but it still seems to be possible to talk about a Russian culture of schooling: "the common traditions of the Soviet school are still very much present from Karelia to Kamchatka" (Webber 2000:3; see also Hufton and Elliot 2000). It has been suggested that the roots of this culture lie not just in Soviet schooling, but that they extend back to pre-communist days, despite vast differences in levels of provision (Sutherland 1999). As suggested above, while they were occasionally sites of innovation, and the formal equality

between schools has been overstated, Soviet schools tend to be characterised as rigidly conformist (by decree and by habit) and highly disciplined, and teaching was based on the delivery of the state curriculum. Despite the economic crisis and social upheaval of the past decade, and despite pockets of recognisable change, particularly in new specialised schools, much of this culture appears to have been resilient in 'ordinary' schools.

Despite its shortcomings, Soviet schooling did have its strengths. One of these was its effectiveness in promoting the value of education: "A great strength of the Soviet school is that, in concert with the society it serves, it has got across the message to the mass of the population that study and the acquisition of knowledge are a good thing" (Muckle 1988:182). Whether this wisdom of education as being inherently valuable has survived the end of the Soviet era has been questioned. Polls suggest that the public does not put education high on the list of national priorities - twelfth or thirteenth, according to one survey, far behind the economy and other social issues (Nikandrov 1995). Students have also changed in their attitudes to schooling, according to teachers; studies have revealed that teachers have found a serious decline in discipline, and this issue has had to take a higher priority in their management of classrooms (Poppleton *et al* 1994). This decline is of course relative to what the commentator is used to; to many outsiders, Russian schools still seem very ordered places, at least during lesson times (see, for example, O'Brien 2000). The lessons themselves have been described as not only ordered, but highly structured (to the point of being ritualised), almost theatrical, and marked by intensive teacher-student oral interaction (Alexander 1999, Schweisfurth 1999, Hufton and Elliot 2000). Despite being strongly led by the teacher, they do not

necessarily fit the 'traditional' stereotype of quietly passive students and lecture modes of teaching.

The social function of education in creating the right kind of citizen is another area of shift in terms of the culture of schooling. Formerly, "...that people could be 'moulded' was the central assumption of all of the reforms of the Soviet period" (Jones 1994:4). This moulding has been discussed in terms of curriculum, but another essential facet of school life was *vospitanie*, loosely translated as upbringing – the personal, social and moral development of children – and this was the responsibility of teachers. The teacher's role in the process was complemented by the school-based existence of important communist youth groups such as the Pioneers. The withdrawal of these aspects of schooling have left gaps which post-communist culture has yet to fill.

Conclusion

The 'before' and 'after' picture of education in Russia is decidedly murky. This is due in part to the problems of disentangling the realities of Soviet Education from the myths, but the more significant factor may be the persistence of continuities in teaching and in the culture of schooling, despite both large-scale legislation at the national level and varying degrees of innovation at the local level. As with South Africa, the application of Bishop's (1986) analysis of problems of implementation may help to reveal why the outcomes have not been as the optimists intended.

In terms of the intrinsic nature of the reforms, they have been expensive and complex, and in implementation they have suffered from communication

problems. They have attempted to address all aspects of education, from structure and funding to curriculum and pedagogy, while reducing access to dwindling state funds, and increasing reliance on regions, parents and sponsors, many of which cannot provide the necessary level of resources for survival, let alone for a major overhaul. Serious shortfalls in teacher salaries, and a lack of adequate textbooks which can support the new perspectives on politics and history, are two major problem areas. In terms of human resources, teachers with a long indoctrination into communist ideology and traditional modes of teaching are challenged to adapt to new ideas, and for most there are few opportunities for retraining. In schools where the local constituency is able to provide financial support, innovation has had a better opportunity to take hold. However, the vagueness of some aspects of the reforms (such as the notion of 'humanisation'), and general confusion in dissemination, have meant a wide variety of interpretations. This would not necessarily be a bad thing; however, the overall effect has been diluted, and some interpretations are not necessarily in keeping with the emancipatory spirit of the reforms, even if those involved believe them to be.

The reforms have been introduced into a situation of financial stringency and social upheaval. There are shifting power structures, some of which are less legitimate than others – the famous Russian mafia, for example, has considerable influence over all spheres of life, including schooling. The reforms are a radical departure from the past, but do not necessarily fit the present *Zeitgeist* either. The potential rewards of innovation are fairly intangible and demand a huge level of commitment from teachers and society in general.

Thus, there are serious situational and environmental challenges to their effective implementation as well.

Ideologically, have the key players in education been happy about abandoning communist values and the associated curriculum and pedagogy? Despite evidence that most support the basic spirit of the reforms, it is clear that few are happy with the present situation, and that some aspects of Soviet schooling, such as the level of student discipline, are missed. In the wider society, there is still strong political support for the communist party, and an apparent decline in faith in the importance of education.

Thus, the reforms in Russia face all of the key challenges which may constrain the effective implementation of educational change: intrinsic, material and organisational, situational, environmental, and ideological. As in South Africa, recent policy changes have attempted to respond to some of the problems of implementation that have thwarted reform. The new *National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation* (2000), released since the instatement of Vladimir Putin as the new head of state, reiterates many goals similar to those in the 1992 Law on Education. It additionally acknowledges and attempts to address the financial crisis in education by promising substantial increases in government spending on education, including salary and pension increases (Ministry of Education 2000). However, Lenskaya (2000) has pointed out that these 'Christmas card' or 'jackpot' promises are already showing signs of being revised. What is clear is that in the face of the current constraints, a huge amount of the burden of success is placed on teachers to act alone in making a success of the reforms, and how they view the task and their role will be a

crucial factor in whether change takes place and in the direction that change takes.

Contextual Comparisons: Russia and South Africa

The similarities and differences between the educational contexts of the transitional states of Russia and South Africa do not form the main basis of this comparative study. The focus is on comparisons among individuals from both countries and their responses to change. However, it is still important to have a comparative sense of the contextual issues at the national level, even if they are only one factor likely to influence the individual. Therefore, to complement the background offered in the previous section of this chapter, this section will outline in a comparative way some of the major issues in the two countries, based on the literature reviewed in the previous sections and on findings from the initial phase of fieldwork (issues arising from the case study phase will be explored in the findings chapter). Some of the differences are decidedly obvious: very often the first question asked about this study is how two such different situations can be made comparable. Some of these (such as those in location or climate) are too glaringly apparent to even warrant a mention, yet these are not necessarily the only or the most significant in terms of the experiences of key figures in educational transition. One vital difference which must immediately be raised is the problem of talking about South Africa in any coherent way. The issue of race permeates everything: whether the question is about resources, capacities, schooling culture, curriculum, language of instruction or the nature of and reasons for pedagogical continuities, race will enter that question, and the situation will be very different for each racial group. In terms of attitudes, loyalty to one's racial group is generally more powerful

than national patriotism. This (among other factors) makes cross-national comparisons complicated, but it is still possible to talk about the policy level, and attempt to distinguish what the implications are for individual groups.

However, if one takes a very broad view, there are remarkable similarities in general trends change in education. The chart on the following page was compiled early in this study to illustrate some important generalisations that can be made if one consciously blurs the finer details. Closer examination highlights more subtle comparisons which play potentially important roles in how the reforms have been manifested and in how teachers interpret and enact them.

The first basis for comparison is a crucial one: both countries are what Cowen (1996 and 1999) has called *transitologies*.

Conceptually 'transitologies' can be defined as the more or less simultaneous collapse and reconstruction of (i) state apparatuses (ii) economic and social stratification systems and (iii) the central value system, especially the political value system to offer a new definition of the future. Crucially, I define transitologies as occurring in a short timespan; operationally say 10 years...My simplest question is what are their rules - that is, what are the rules of their chaos, what are the patternings of educational variation that we may expect? (Cowen 1999:84)

Russia and South Africa: Major Educational Reforms

	<u><i>Russia</i></u> <i>Communist</i>	<i>Post-Communist</i>	<u><i>South Africa</i></u> <i>Apartheid</i>	<i>Post-Apartheid</i>
Administration and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> centralised control regulated equity for 'normal' schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decentralisation of policy implementation deregulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> centralised control, racially divided administration, funding and provision inequity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> decentralisation of policy implementation attempts to redress inequities
Provision and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by catchment area for most students a few specialist elite schools separate schools for children with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diversification of types of specialist schools (eg ecological or arts) with varying admission requirements and costs moves toward inclusion of children with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> separate schools for white, Indian, coloured and black students, with disparities in resources, class sizes, and quality separate schools for most SEN provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> school desegregation (but integration more problematic) growth in private provision moves toward SEN inclusion
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> state-dictated, including textbooks Communist indoctrination in all subjects scientific outlook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> greater curricular choice for schools and teachers, based on schedule of subjects from central and regional authorities 'humanisation' of content and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> state-dictated white perspective on history, culture different objectives for different races 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum 2005 - Outcomes-based Education focusing more on life skills, less on content re-writing of history; pluralist perspectives
Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> largely content-based, authoritarian intensive teacher:whole class interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouragement of child-centred, less didactic approaches, more experiential learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> largely content-based, authoritarian ('Christian National Education') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouragement of more child-centred, less didactic approaches, more group work and experiential learning

Not only are Russia and South Africa in a key phase of political and social transition to democracy, they have been doing so to remarkably similar timing, and since the beginning of the transition, it could be said that they have been in roughly synchronous phases. In both countries, the cracks started to appear in the old regime in the late 1980s, the result of a combination of longstanding internal and external pressures. The early 1990s marked the official transition to democracy and the first democratically-elected governments and their first legislated education laws. The mid-to-late 1990s have been periods of implementation, and a combination of consolidation and troubles as the new democratic regimes attempt to take firmer hold on national affairs, including education. The pace of change has of course not been identical in the two countries; neither has it been consistent within either of them, but there are marked similarities. There are also indications that these transitions have been part of a global trend, and Russia and South Africa are often used as markers of this *Zeitgeist*.

For this study, the recent and parallel stages of transition are highly significant, as the vast majority of teachers currently working in schools in the two countries were educated and worked as teachers under the apartheid or communist regimes. The reforms they have experienced have been introduced in similar time frames. The implementation needs and strategies have not been identical – OBE, for example, adds a need for a whole new understanding, and a substantial increase in the amount and nature of the administrative burden, and it has been phased in at different grade levels each year. However, generally in both countries there have been similar problems of insufficient and inconsistent in-service training, and complaints about the pace and scope of change.

Despite these parallels, an important difference exists between the two situations in terms of the development of new education policies by the newly-elected governments. In Russia many current politicians and key figures have been in the system since communist days, creating what some might call continuity, and others, inertia. The reforms have been more like a series of substantial adjustments to the existing system, without a clearly new vision. In South Africa, on the other hand, the ANC existed as an unofficial opposition for many years before gaining legitimate power, and in this role had already begun to formulate their own education policies. The principles of 'People's Education', with their equity and social justice basis differed radically from the policies of the apartheid regime. While some commentators have lamented the diluting of this vision in response to economic pressures and the realities of implementing change, it is still a baseline to which people refer. I have the strong impression that there are more policy analysts operating in South Africa than in any other country with which I am familiar, creating a culture of criticism which is certainly not paralleled in Russia, despite a fair measure there of comment (and some degree of cynicism). The reason for these differences in the culture of debate may well lie in South Africa's long struggle against apartheid, a movement to which so many groups and individuals have had a powerful commitment and an ensuing sense of ownership. While this constant internal (and external) opposition was the major factor in the downfall of the apartheid government, in the case of Russia the sense is of decay from within the authorities of communism which eventually resulted in a breakdown, rather than an overthrow of the regime.

Using basic economic indicators, further similarities emerge between the two countries, but also some important differences. Their gross national products are broadly similar, and life expectancies are also alike. However, these basic statistics hide some important truths. In both countries there is an urban/rural dichotomy in terms of earnings, life expectancy and access to basic facilities such as water and sanitation. Within South Africa, they also conceal a vast difference between races. This is a critical factor within the current framework of reform: the desire to redress these imbalances is a driving force, and the frustrations borne of the efforts and failures are a continuing source of dissatisfaction and unrest. Despite the large injections into the education system, there is still the feeling that it could never be enough. In Russia, statistics and perceptions both indicate that materially, things are getting worse for the majority, while a small minority profit from the market reforms. Poor material conditions have led to widespread social and health problems, and among many people, nostalgia for the days of communism when people had little but it was enough. The school system has suffered from serious financial constraints in this context, and individual schools depend less and less on federal funds and more and more on alternative sources. While Russia does not have the problem of trying to cope with a legacy of inequality, it seems slowly to be creating one.

In both countries an important theme in the process of democratisation in education has been decentralisation. Important points, however, must be kept in mind about the differing contexts of this decentralisation. In Russia, the centralised education system was functional in the Soviet era, and what existed then was surely one of the largest and most cohesive education systems ever to have existed, despite its legendary bureaucracy and questions about the real nature of communist equity. In South Africa, centralisation had a slightly different meaning: education was divided

racially at the centre and thereafter controlled by different departments, who exercised different degrees of control over their constituent schools. For example, the inspection system was highly rigorous and authoritarian for white schools; under-developed, lax and ineffectual for black schools.

Decentralisation has been, at least in part, and especially in Russia, an economically-driven move. Significant powers have been devolved to the provinces in the case of South Africa, and to regions and raions in Russia. In both cases, the financial and human capacity of these administrative bodies to run education affairs in their areas is neither well-developed, nor consistent across regions. In education, many powers have also been granted to schools; in South Africa school governing bodies have become key players, while in Russia, school administrators have kept a tighter reign on power. These powers include choices over language and admission policies, for example, within broad policy frameworks. The details of these policy frameworks do differ in significant ways. For example, in South Africa the right to determine levels of tuition fees and language of instruction of state-supported schools has been used by some historically white schools as a means of keeping out black students, many of whom are unable to afford them, or do not want to study in Afrikaans. In Russia, state legislation forbidding independently-set tuition fees has ostensibly maintained a degree of equity, but administrators have found creative ways of ensuring that the school community consists of the 'right' kind of students and parents, and that parents provide financial support. In both countries, there has been a growth in private schooling to fill the perceived gaps in public provision. The decentralisation of the financing of education, the power exerted by market forces, and the increase in private schooling have in both countries resulted in a tension between quality and equity which is unlikely to be easily resolved, certainly not in the current contexts of

financial stringency. The association of democracy with the free market has ensured that such forces are likely to continue to privilege those with financial and cultural capital.

The influence of the World Bank and other international agencies on the process of transition in the two countries is also significant. Their precise influence is difficult to assess, since the governments involved are keen to be seen to be independent on the one hand, and yet need to respond to agencies' demands on the other. Commentators differ in their evaluation of the impact of the process (see, for example, King 1997 and Eklof 1998). However, the devolving of much education spending is in line with World Bank policy, as is the contribution of user groups to education costs. Nonetheless, the fact that national spending on education in South Africa is on the rise suggests that this effect is being mediated. There is also evidence of inputs in terms of pedagogy and curriculum; however, in Russia there is a growing sense of need to exert independent judgments on these matters of national importance, and an increasing awareness of some of the positive legacies of the Soviet era, of which outside agencies such as the World Bank and OECD have tended to be dismissive. In South Africa there has been from the outset a determination to control the agenda in this regard, even while there is considerable 'borrowing' of foreign education practices (such as OBE). Interestingly, 'on the ground' in both countries, there is the strong belief that the direction which reform is taking parallels international movements. The reaction was surprise when people everywhere and at all levels were told that this is not necessarily the case, and that practices such as child-centred pedagogy are not only contested but actively discouraged by national authorities in the UK.

The approach to the democratisation of curriculum in the two countries has been quite different. In Russia, there has been an apportioning of control over the content of curriculum between federal, regional and school interests. The curriculum is meant to be 'humanised' (a vague term) and communist ideology removed. However, much of how this is done has been left to schools and teachers, and interpretations vary widely. It is apparent that the notion of curriculum held by educationists has not been challenged significantly by the reforms; its basis is still in the content of what is taught. In South Africa, a particular curricular programme, OBE, has been adopted. Content is not specified, and much in this regard is left to the discretion of teachers. However, the basis of the new curriculum in students' learning outcomes was intended to shift the focus away from content, encouraging a rethinking of the notion of curriculum. Yet implementation problems have meant that, as in Russia, on the ground the old ideas around curriculum prevail. The Russian notion of 'humanisation' has parallels in South Africa in the emphasis on differentiation of outcomes between students, and in the stated outcomes which target the development of life skills. As in the Russian context, this area is criticised as vague and underdeveloped. However, the Russian approach to the decentralisation of curricular control has made curriculum there something of a 'moving target' – open to input and interpretation at so many levels that it is difficult to say who got it right or wrong – while in South Africa the national and explicit outcomes of OBE can be examined and criticised more easily at the policy level, and contrasted with classroom realities.

In both contexts, under the old regime, education was used as a means to inculcate the official ideology. In Russia, textbooks were permeated with hagiographies of communist leaders, and clear references to the superiority of communist values can

easily be extracted from texts. An important, and indeed defining role of teachers was to bring up children to these values, and despite some periods of innovation and cynicism, on the whole this role appears to have been taken very seriously. In South Africa, the bias of the content in favour of white perspectives, and the emphasis on the memorisation of facts were a slightly more subtle attempt to use education to perpetuate the *status quo*; acute differences and inequalities in structures and resources were more explicit and had more obvious effects. Especially among the black majority, subversion of the government's aims was very common, although it rarely took the form of educationally effective alternatives: hence the breakdown of the culture of teaching and learning. In both countries, at the level of discourse new policies have paid 'lip service' to the need to use education to develop in students new values appropriate to democracy. However, there has been criticism of the effectiveness of these efforts, citing a lack of consultation, vague and slippery references and terms that are open to potentially unhelpful interpretations, and a lack of support for teachers in helping them to understand for themselves and to learn to develop in children democratic values and skills.

As this study has focused on primary teachers, it is important to be aware of differences in the nature of primary education and primary schools in Russia and South Africa. One key difference is that in Russia, virtually all primary education takes place within schools which cover all of compulsory schooling (years 1 – 9), and many of which also include kindergartens and senior secondary classes. The primary division of each school includes classes 1 to 4 (although most children proceed to the next division at the end of year 3). Administration of the primary phase is under the director and a specialist deputy. By contrast, South African primary schools are separate institutions which cover years 1 – 7 within the first stage

of the national qualifications framework. Because of these differences, I have used a loose definition of primary teacher to include anyone teaching children 12 years old or younger. In both countries, teachers are trained especially to teach the primary phase, and for the earlier years it is a non-subject-specialist qualification for which training college admission standards are generally lower than for secondary schools. In South Africa, in the upper primary years in larger schools students are taught by subject specialists. As in all phases, within South Africa standards, philosophy, pupil:teacher ratios, and facilities vary widely between schools, generally along racial lines. In Russia, new specialist schools offer choice in subject focus, methodology and academic levels – to those with sufficient cultural capital to gain admission. However, even within many ordinary schools there is a new approach to streaming, whereby some groups follow an enriched course based on the developmental principles of psychologists such as Davydov, while other ‘corrective’ streams receive tuition aimed at helping them to ‘catch up’ with their peers.

While bearing in mind the problems of polarising ‘traditional’ and ‘progressive’ teaching methodologies, in terms of pedagogy, the most common teaching style found in primary classrooms in both countries is the former, and the latter is being encouraged as a dimension of the democratic reforms. Didactic teaching styles have become associated with authoritarianism and the development of passive, unquestioning adults; child-centred learning is associated with the humanising of schooling in Russia, and the with the development of children’s critical skills in South Africa. However, in both countries, pedagogical continuities prevail despite the official line on appropriate teaching methods; reasons posited include teachers’ long habituation to traditional approaches in their own schooling, in teacher training, and

in the culture of the schools where they work. These issues are interrogated and explored empirically in this study.

There are different approaches to the management of schools in the two countries. Under communism, directors were caught in the middle between state dictates and the needs of their own schools, staff members and students; management styles were generally very authoritarian. This appears to have changed little, and this style reflects a wider cultural tendency to hierarchical relationships; the very word 'manage' in Russian has this connotation of control and power. In South Africa it is much more difficult to generalise, although many people there point to highly authoritarian management in many white schools, while the management of many black schools suffered from the same breakdown in order as other aspects of schooling.

Who are the primary school teachers in Russia and South Africa? What do they have in common, and how do they differ? The complexities of this question will be tackled in more depth on the basis of findings from this study. However, based on the literature on the two countries, similar issues emerge: their capacity, commitment and status. In Russia, while some concerns have been voiced about the capacity of teachers to cope with the transition, the quality of the Soviet education system has at least produced a group which is, on the whole, highly literate and numerate, cultured, and committed. There is much talk of teaching as a 'calling', and while it has never been a lucrative profession and there are concerns that its prestige is on the decline, it has enjoyed, and still enjoys, professional status, and teachers are revered in national holidays and other public events. However, many young people today do not see teaching as a good choice of profession, and many in pedagogical

universities are there for a generic higher education rather than for teacher preparation. This is probably due to the extremely poor pay that teachers currently receive, especially in comparison with others who have successfully penetrated the capitalist market. In South Africa, the capacity, culture and status of teachers is divided along racial lines. Black teachers, for example, are generally poorly-educated; their own schooling is likely to have been in poor conditions, and may have been disrupted by strikes and unrest. Many of them are unqualified; those who qualified during apartheid were trained at institutions which suffered from 'third world' standards and traditions of teacher education, including poor resources and didactic lecture methods. However, unique among teachers in these two countries (and a rarity elsewhere as well) black teachers' pay and resourcing has improved since the end of apartheid. However, this has not had a major impact on the recruitment of qualified black teachers; this may be because other professions which were formerly closed to blacks are now options which might be pursued by an ambitious individual with some education. On the other hand, white teachers, who have generally had a well-resourced (if not especially inspiring) education, have seen both their buying-power and their status eroded by the end of apartheid.

Overall, despite major changes to legislation embracing the structure, control and funding of education, curriculum and pedagogy in both countries, there are important continuities which prevail in both countries. Educational culture – as difficult as it is to define, and as different as it might be between national cultures and sub-cultures – is a powerful force which is not easily altered by decree. The reforms in Russia and South Africa have been ambitious and optimistic but large question marks remain over the success of their implementation. As the literature review has revealed, the shadowy area between policy and what happens in schools

lives not only in these 'transitologies', but wherever national aims meet local and individual capacities and needs.

Chapter Four - Research Methodology

In this chapter, the methods used to approach the study's research questions will be outlined. A very significant choice which has shaped the research was the decision to use case study approaches. Here, the reasoning behind the use of this approach will be outlined, and the means by which these case studies might generate understanding of the subject will be discussed. In the second section of the chapter, the complementary methods used in field to gather data will be explored.

Gleaning Meaning from Case Studies

Case study approaches have been both celebrated:

The best case studies transcend the boundaries between art and science, retaining both coherence and complexity (Walker 1986:197),

and denounced, as a 'soft option' (Robson 1993), or a 'shallow-end' activity for the 'statistically naïve' (Hamilton 1980). Like all educational research methods, the successful application of case study approaches relies on their appropriateness to the research questions, and on the researcher's efforts to use them reflectively and rigorously. Case study methods generally, and as they apply to this study, will here be explored. Some of this discussion has appeared in the journal *Compare* under the title 'Gleaning Meaning from Case Studies in International Comparison: teachers' experiences of reform in Russia and South Africa' (Schweisfurth 1999b).

Robson defines case study as "...a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (Robson 1993:147) The

phenomenon or case being studied may be virtually anything; within educational research, for example, the case study unit is often a class or a school. They are often, but not exclusively, associated with qualitative research. As Cohen and Manion (1991) point out, the purpose of case studies is to “...probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the ...(case study) unit, with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which the unit belongs” (p 125). They offer the advantages of being firmly embedded in reality, with attention to the subtleties and complexities of each case, including rich detail which may at times be contradictory, depending on the perspectives of the subjects involved (Cohen and Manion 1991). These qualities make case study an appropriate choice of approach to address the research questions at hand. The changes being experienced by teachers in Russia and South Africa are extremely complicated and demanding, and reach beyond the structures of schooling, curriculum and pedagogy into a redefinition of teachers’ roles and relationships with students, communities and authorities. As discussed in the previous chapter, the education reforms in themselves are not only enormous in scope and fast in pace, but contain elements which are unclear or even contradictory. How teachers respond to these demands is shaped by a complex range of factors, some a result of the national setting, others arising from local factors, and many unique to each individual teacher.

Understanding of the subtleties of teachers’ responses to the strange and stressful pressures of democratic reform demands not distant objectivity, but rather what Stenhouse (in Burgess and Rudduck 1993:72) calls ‘critical intersubjectivity’. The researcher’s interaction with the subjects aimed to

produce understanding which is enhanced by being approached from two different cultural perspectives. For example, teachers may have difficulty articulating which influences from their own schooling experiences have been most profound on their practice. However, the understanding of both the researcher and the subject can be improved through a sequence of interviews and lesson observation where the teacher has the chance to think back to his or her own school days, to predict the progress and outcomes of a lesson, to act, to explain, and to reflect. In response to cues from the researcher, who sees the lesson through different eyes and who finds alien the details of life and schooling under communism or apartheid, the taken-for-granted is foregrounded, and memory, practice and espoused theory are triangulated. In turn, the researcher's perspective is interrogated by the emphasis the teacher places on different aspects of each of these. This process takes time, and requires a cumulation of understanding and a rapport with the subject which cannot easily be created in a one-off interview. Such intricate and embedded phenomena are certainly not accessible by questionnaire or other survey methods. In researching these issues, it was concluded that "...it is better to have in-depth, accurate knowledge of one setting than superficial and possibly skewed or misleading information about isolated relationships in many settings" (Spindler 1982 in Crossley and Vulliamy 1984:203). Case study approaches were therefore employed, and it is hoped that the results will complement the studies in the existing literature which rely on survey or single-interview strategies to address related questions.

What is often expected from cross-national studies involving two countries are generalisations about the two national units, and an analysis of the

commonalities and differences between them; in this case, statements about national characteristics of teachers in Russia and teachers in South Africa. However, that is neither the aim of the study, nor an effective use of the data about individual teachers. Similarities may exist among case study teachers from one country, and this may be one potential finding. Nonetheless, this would be a comparative study even if there were only one country involved; enough variety exists to generate interesting comparisons among the case studies in either one of the countries. The diversity is such that some individuals could have more in common with teachers from the other country than with colleagues from their own: the education traditions among white South African teachers, for example, seem to be shared as much with Russian teachers as with their black compatriots. In any event, those sorts of generalisations - 'South African teachers are like this; Russians are like that' - are not what case studies explore. They celebrate processes and the particular more than they do the fixed and the general. Therefore, the case study units were individual teachers, while their schools, regions and countries were potential explanatory units for findings concerning each individual case.

However, generalisability remains an issue, even if one chooses to avoid the word and to focus on the unique aspects of a particular case. Research which has no apparent meaning beyond its own boundaries has limited appeal and even less potential for usefulness of findings, except in situations deemed very similar to those described. It is hoped that using case studies, this research might "...use the micro level to illustrate the macro" (Vulliamy *et al.*, 1990:72). In attempting this, writers on case study have addressed various combinations of the key issues of *selection, verification, cumulation, generalisation, and application*

(Crossley and Vulliamy 1984; Atkinson and Delamont 1986; Walker 1986; Cohen and Manion 1991; Burgess and Rudduck 1993; Yin 1993; Stake 1995). Different commentators emphasise different aspects. The discussion here draws especially on Stenhouse's analysis of verification, cumulation, generalisation and application (in Burgess and Rudduck 1993), Crossley and Vulliamy's (1984) and Crossley and Bennett's (1997) writing on cumulation and generalisation, and Yin (1993) and Walker (1986) on selection. This chapter will show how each of these factors is essential, and dependent on the others in a linear way, with overcoming one challenge being dependent on the researcher successfully dealing with the one before. Each of these factors will here be explored briefly, using illustrative examples from the methodology of this study.

Selection

Selectivity on the part of the researcher is an essential dimension of case study, whatever claims might be made for its flexibility and resistance to premature closure. There exists an inevitable trade-off between selection and 'looseness': the research must make some decisions about what to look at, what to look for, and what to present afterwards; the question is the degree to which these choices are restrictive. Even if these decisions are not taken consciously, preconceptions and bias will interfere with the ability either to mirror the participants' perceptions without interpretation, or to interpret them objectively.

Especially critical selection occurs at three stages of the case study research process. Firstly, the choice of how to define the case is obviously critical. Part of this process is to delimit the boundaries of the case, often problematic

because of the ways in which actors and institutions are embedded within wider contexts:

Naturally occurring social 'systems' are not self-evidently 'bounded'. Their boundaries are matters of *construction*, by actors and analysts (Atkinson and Delamont 1986:241).

Secondly, in the process of data collection, events and incidents will be sampled, because it is not possible, or even desirable, to note everything. Finally, at the editing and presentation stages, researchers will discriminate among the data collected, attributing greater significance to some than to others. At the end of the process, any closure is ultimately premature: "Like works of art, case studies are never finished, only left" (Walker 1986:212). Selection is therefore an inescapable aspect of case study research; however, its effect may be tempered through conscious application of principles which expose and discipline it. If the selection process does not confront these decisions explicitly - if, for example, exceptional examples are portrayed as typical, or vice versa, or if ease of access for the research is the main selection criterion - the illuminative potential of the cases is reduced and the study is likely to fall at the first hurdle.

In the process of designing this research project, the first selection juncture came in choosing the two countries from which to present cases. Russia and South were chosen for a number of reasons which have already been explored. The next important step was to define the case study unit. Why teachers as units? Firstly, teachers are clearly very important to the process of democratisation in education. However, as the literature review has highlighted, there is a considerable body of literature from various countries describing the "constellation of factors" (Fuller *et al* 1996) which helps to shape the culture of

teaching and the responses of individual teachers. While the categories of influences may be similar, and there are discernable patterns of response among groups of teachers, there are still critical differences at the individual level. Even two teachers at one school may have quite different reactions to demands for change. For these reasons, teachers were chosen as the unit to be explored, while other units - classes, schools, constituencies, regions, countries - are explanatory. Primary teachers were chosen on the grounds of both theory and practicality: firstly, the primary phase as the beginning of formal schooling for most is a vital stage for the development of democratic attitudes in children; secondly, the funding for this PhD, from the University of Warwick, was tied to the study of primary education. I do not mind acknowledging that this second reason was as important as the first, as such pragmatic justifications are a virtually inevitable aspect of the current climate of educational research.

Felicitous chance and personal contacts - as they very often do - played roles in the selection of primary phase teachers to participate in the study. In Russia, I was fortunate to have the assistance of the Perm State Pedagogical University, who were part of an EU-funded project whose partners I contacted at Oxford University. Through their contacts with schools, and through teachers met on INSET courses offered there, it was not difficult to have access to a large pool of potential case studies, some of whom were self-selecting, and some of whom were approached by their headteachers. In South Africa, a 'snowball' approach was used to find schools and teachers who might be appropriate. Starting with the school that friends' sons attended in Pretoria, I was able to contact other schools of different types; having an introduction from another headteacher, and having assistance in identifying appropriate schools, made the task of

access much more feasible. Very helpful assistance was also forthcoming from another contact, this time at DFID, who was able to assist in filling gaps that remained, such as access to rural schools.

Having generated a reasonably substantial pool in each country of potential cases from which to choose, the next stage was to select individual teachers. This process was informed by understanding gained in the exploratory phase of the fieldwork; the aim in selection was to represent as far as possible the range of experience in each of the countries. In each country, one teacher interviewed during the exploratory phase was also later used as a case study in order to add a longitudinal dimension to the study, and to gain insight into what changes had occurred in their situations and in themselves in the intervening time (approximately 18 months in Russia and 12 months in South Africa). The selection was therefore purposive, rather than random. It was felt that by studying six teachers from each country in the second phase of the research a balance could be struck – considering the ever-present constraints of time and funding – between in-depth understanding of individual cases, and comparative potential which might reveal wider patterns which might exist. Based on this aim, the following profiles of cases were included.

Russia: five female teachers and one male; a range of experience from relatively inexperienced to very experienced; teachers who were receiving specialist in-service training as part of the transition process, and teachers who were not; teachers from ordinary, elite, and special schools, and schools which did and did not receive training and resource intervention in the form of projects; regular classroom teachers, a teacher of a stream for children with special needs,

and a teacher specialising in 'new' pedagogy based on the principles of developmental psychology. It would have been desirable to include a teacher at a rural school but access was not possible, mainly due to the reluctance of the university to facilitate this. The reasoning was the problem of roads (many were impassable, even in spring), but informants have suggested that, additionally, my university hosts were not happy about revealing the conditions likely to be found there.

South Africa: five female teachers and one male; three black teachers (two Zulu and one Soetho), two white (one English and one Afrikaaner), and one Indian; a range of experience from almost newly-qualified to very experienced; two township, one rural, one urban and two suburban schools; teachers from schools whose constituency and position had changed little, and others from schools which had experienced enormous demographic and policy changes; from schools where staff had received specialist training in the light of the recent changes, and from schools which had had none; from schools which were extremely well-resourced by almost any standards, and from schools which were resource-poor even by developing world standards. The enormous diversity in South Africa made it impossible to include teachers from all racial groups and from all types of communities and schools. It would have been desirable, for example, to have included among the cases a coloured teacher, and a white teacher from the more resistant schools. However, it could easily have become absurd to try to have a single teacher to 'represent' every special interest in the country.

In the field methodology section of this chapter, the process of collecting data is explained. Choices were made as to how to use the instruments of interview and observation selectively, without eliminating unforeseen possibilities. Thus, by making controlled choices in terms of contexts, units of study, individual cases, and data collection - within limits - the selection stage of the study was hopefully sufficiently rigorous to make the next stages feasible.

Verification

Once the researcher has controlled for the problems of selection, how can the data gathered be verified? Statistical means of verification are obviously unsuitable for case studies which are based on qualitative methodology. One means of testing internal validity is through respondent verification. In this study, the final stage of interviews with each subject involved a feedback session (see field methods) during which the teacher had the opportunity to verify or help to refine impressions that had been gained over the two days of study. I was therefore equipped to tell a story which was phenomenologically true - that is, from the subject's point of view - while beginning to fit it into wider frameworks. Further respondent verification was sought after the five case studies included in this thesis were written. These five teachers each received a copy of the interview-based sections of their case study, and had the opportunity to respond to them. Responses (while unfortunately not very detailed, generally) indicated the teachers' agreement to what had been written as a reflection of their circumstances, experiences and feelings.

Depending on what the researcher is attempting to convey, adhering rigidly to the singular and sometimes partially formed and partially articulated perspectives of the subjects themselves may be problematic. Inconsistencies often appear between, for example, words and actions, or between opinions of different individuals involved with each study; in fact, these discrepancies and conflicting definitions are considered by some to be essential phenomena of case study (Simons 1987). In this study, by far the most important perspectives were the teachers', and their perceptions and interpretations of events were sought and communicated. However, in addition, contextual information was solicited from heads and teacher at the same schools; these data could shed new light on the primary perspective. Observations were also set against the teacher's viewpoint. For example: is the teacher's description of their educational priorities reflected in how they spend their time in the classroom? Is the teacher's impression of how students behave in groups consistent with what is observed by the researcher?

These 'judgements' meant that what is presented here is not an unfiltered version of each teacher's story. Among subjects researched, there may well be personal agendas, as they are likely to want to appear in the best possible light. Unquestioning indulgence of these agendas will produce an unbalanced account: "The case study worker may produce a study which is internally consistent and acceptable to all those involved, but which in fact relates only marginally to the 'truth'" (Walker 1986:197). The compromise solution was to take note of inconsistencies, discuss them where possible with the teacher, seek respondent verification, and assure anonymity for the teachers written up as full case studies.

Reaching agreement with the respondent is one way in which the researcher's perspective may be verified; however, more is demanded when the case studies are compared with each other and wider implications sought. Judgement by the researcher is informed in part by his or her own comparative perspective. Through this, the researcher may have an 'intuitive' sense of the authenticity of an account or a comparison, in the same way that good fiction 'rings true' to an appreciative reader. Important as this verisimilitude might be to the extraction of meaning from qualitative case study research, when one wants to go beyond this 'common sense' level, verification becomes more demanding: "The successful unravelling and explication of mundane beliefs and actions demand the suspension of common sense, not its uncritical endorsement" (Atkinson and Delamont 1986:246). Coherence with a larger theoretical framework can help to substantiate the study's perspective; thus, verification within and between case studies in one research project is best supplemented with comparison to other examples of related research, and theories generated by them, such as those outlined in the literature review. Through cumulation, individual case studies both rely on this framework, and contribute to it.

Cumulation

Left in isolation, there is the danger that a case study will remain an idiosyncratic 'one-off', neither seen in the light of related research, nor contributing to the wider discussion. In describing the process of making case study research cumulative, Stenhouse (in Burgess and Rudduck 1993) uses the analogy of improving one's chess game by studying a large number of matches: the emergence of skills and understanding is a gradual process requiring the

input of a large number of records of possible sequences and outcomes, without ever being able to predict their dynamics perfectly. This analogy might similarly be applied to the experienced comparative education researcher, who, like the international consultant, needs to have 'protean adaptability' and 'several operating cultures' (Fry and Thurber 1989:130). The researcher's repertoire of cases researched creates flexible analytical frameworks which simultaneously inform new experience and are modified in the light of it. Sensitisation to context is critical here, as indiscriminate 'bullying' of data into pre-existing personal, cultural, or theoretical frameworks may convince the researcher that the findings are meaningful, but it will not bear up to the critical scrutiny of other perspectives. Crossley and Vulliamy (1997) recommend the use of a combination of outsider and insider perspectives in the research process to help to "...facilitate studies that are more sensitive to local contextual factors, while retaining systematic rigour and an important degree of detachment from the culture and world view being studied" (Crossley and Vulliamy 1997:3; see also Dyer and Chomski 1997). A cumulation of perspectives as well as cases is demanded, during all phases of the research. In this study, this was sought through discussions with informants such as translators and contacts living within the cultural context, and later, post-analysis, by discussing findings with experts on the two countries.

The comparative nature of this research means that it has cumulation built into it: resonance and dissonance among the cases generates a new level of data beyond the singular. In addition, it is embedded in theory which exists about teachers and educational reform and innovation, from studies such as those

surveyed in the literature review. The theories generated in a cumulative way through such comparisons might then lead to the potential for generalisation.

Generalisation

Once a case study, or a comparative study of cases, has been placed in the context of wider findings, issues and theory, potential then exists for generalisation. The word generalisation is often associated with statistical validity, but as Alexander (1999) points out, insistence on sampling techniques as prerequisites for generalisability about a system are unwarranted. As he notes, rarely are any studies - quantitative ones included - based on a sufficient number of schools within a system to sustain claims of numerical generalisability; however, *cultural* generalisability depends more on the quality of the research methods used than on the nature of the sample (Alexander 1999). There are other words, sometimes applied to case study research, to convey a similar message with varying degrees of credibility, which are free of this association with statistics: illumination, comparability, fittingness, resonance, allusion, vicariousness.

What is the nature of 'generalisation' in the context of comparative research which employs case study approaches? In describing the potential of the case study approach they have used, Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) outline the processes of cumulation and generalisation as they perceive them, in a study with similar themes to the one at hand. Their use of conceptual frameworks and contextual information to reach conclusions robust enough to test assumptions and to shed light on the issues is very much in keeping with the approaches attempted in this study.

This evaluation was conducted in the light of a review of literature relating to curriculum development and implementation within a conceptual framework derived from research on barriers to curriculum change, and with special reference to the environmental, historical and socio-political contexts of the innovation. Conclusions were therefore drawn from a wide range of data and the study demonstrates how case studies...can usefully contribute to the analysis of contemporary educational problems, how macro- and micro-level research can be profitably combined and how more general conclusions can be abstracted from such work. In the latter respect, however, it should be recognised that given the epistemological foundations of case study, although findings are used to challenge certain assumptions currently held by many curriculum change theorists, no attempt is made to extrapolate general laws or universally applicable recommendations in a positivistic sense. Rather, at its broadest level, this study attempts to offer new insights and critical perspectives on the process of school-centred innovation, to generate increased awareness and understanding of the factors that influence the functioning of such change strategies...(Crossley and Vulliamy 1984:201)

In this study, too, the intention, as outlined above, is to give meaning to the study beyond its immediate boundaries, without arguing for universality. The emphasis is on insight rather than overview.

In the light of these aims, can this study cast light on the circumstances and perspectives of six Russian teachers at one point in time? Of all Russian and South African teachers? On specific groups within these countries, such as black South African teachers in township schools? Am I in a position to say something about teachers in contexts of democratic change? Or in all contexts of change and innovation? Or even about all teachers? The further one gets from the specifics of the case unit, the more stretched the comparability of *findings* becomes. Hopefully, however, to varying degrees and to some extent, all of the above are possible. Provided selection, verification and cumulation have been effective, the potential to generalise *to theory* will exist. If one is in a situation where it is possible to identify strongly with specific dimensions of

individual cases, then findings are relevant; theory, however, can be more inclusive in its scope.

According to Cohen and Manion (1991), a case study "...reduces the dependency of the reader upon unstated implicit assumptions...and makes the research process itself accessible" (p 150), allowing readers the opportunity to make their own generalisations. In pursuing this possibility, the question of presentation becomes very important, as it is through this that readers will judge the authenticity of the resulting account. As constraints of length mean that it is not possible to present all the cases in full along with a cross-case analysis, a combination of generalisations reached based on cross-case comparisons is presented along with a selection of five cases which illustrate individual manifestations of categories. The reader therefore has the opportunity to consider in some detail individual cases, juxtaposed with the cross-case findings, and to see how the two fit together.

Application

If cases are idiosyncratic and if no effort is made to extract universals or patterns through aggregation, then there is little hope of application of the isolated findings, except in a limited number of very similar situations where the specific findings have direct bearing: "Descriptive accounts of individual instances may be accepted as true by practitioners but they are not likely to create appropriate and convincing bases for policy or decision making" (Walker 1986:203). However, individual case studies still have the potential to inform policy, despite the fact that their direct application is not immediately apparent. What

is demanded, as outlined above, is that one goes beyond the descriptive account, as carefully selected and verified as it might be, through cumulation and generalisation. A particular case study's findings are context-bound, not universal, but in the light of other relevant research and theory deriving from it, the patterns and insights gained may help to illuminate similar processes in contexts which have some of the same conditions. It is one source upon which to call when judgements need to be made, and it may form one strand in the complex process of educational decision-making. Stenhouse (1979:6) in Crossley and Vulliamy (1984:201) advocates the potential of understanding gained through case study to 'tutor our judgement': a phrase which captures the non-linear, but no less important, impact that case studies might have on this process.

Case study approaches generally have the advantage of aiming to explain what is actually happening rather than what ought to be happening: information which can help to bring realistic detail to the evidence guiding judgement. As the literature review has outlined, education policy reform and its implementation tactics tend to harbour assumptions about teachers' capacities and loyalties – expectations which may not reflect the realities of teachers' circumstances and priorities. The findings from this study help to reveal these realities, highlighting why and how teacher translation of policy affects the process, and illuminating avenues for more effective – and sympathetic – strategies. Again, the relevance of the specific findings will be greatest in situations very similar to those found in the individual case studies and the research overall. However, the broader, cumulative and generalised issues may

have wider application, perhaps in other contexts experiencing educational reform catalysed by transition to democracy.

Conclusion

The challenge in gleaning meaning from case studies is to appreciate the unique and intrinsic value of each specific case, while at the same time using them comparatively to give them wider significance. The value of such meaning is secured through careful operation of each of the principles outlined above. In this study, both context-specific detail and wider theoretical resonance are being sought. One would not employ case study approaches unless interested in the rich detail of individual experience, but one would not do twelve case studies across two countries without believing that patterns might be found with the potential to illuminate wider issues.

The expression 'gleaning meaning', as found in the title of the published version of this account, is used advisedly. The word 'to glean' originally meant to go behind the reaper in the field, collecting and gathering together the grains that were flung about on the ground. The process of gleaning meaning in case studies is similar: starting with a wide-open field and through selection, verification, cumulation, generalisation and application, ending up with something useful.

Field Methods

Having chosen to use case study approaches for the reasons outlined, how then to conduct them in the field? The instruments used to gather qualitative data in Russia and South Africa included the primary methods of interviewing and classroom observation, complemented by documentary analysis, and field

diaries. Here each of these strategies will be discussed in turn, placing the methods used in the context of literature on educational research methodology. The issues of language and cross-cultural communication and observation will also be addressed.

Interviewing

One of the main sources of data for this research was semi-structured interviews, based on a series of schedules (see appendix one). The basis of the questions for these interviews was the data gathered in the first stage of fieldwork during the first trip to each country. Interviews in this first stage followed a more tightly-framed set of questions for teachers, education managers and teacher trainers and trainees, which covered a wide range of educational issues; these schedules were based on those used in Alexander's fieldwork for the *Five Cultures* project (see schedules in appendix two, and data list for both fieldwork phases, appendix three). Analysis of the results of these interviews yielded the themes which were further explored in the second, case study phase. While there were further interviews with headteachers and teacher trainers in phase two (a full set of schedules is included as appendix four), it was the series of four interviews with each of the case study teachers which was perhaps the most important and relevant data collection, as it was these that explored most directly the issues of teacher identity and responses to change which were highlighted in phase one. The interviews took place wherever we could manage them in sufficient peace and privacy – the head's office, an empty room, the back of the classroom (preferably not during lessons

- but occasionally unavoidably so), the teacher's home, a local coffee shop.

With the permission of the subject, they were recorded and later transcribed.

The first of the four interviews took place before the first lesson observation. It covered basic information about the teacher and her/his position, such as training, length of experience, and classes taught. The subject, aims and activities of the first few lessons were also established. In this way, 'starting off gently' as Woods (1986) recommends, the interview began with necessary, straightforward, relatively closed questions more likely to put the interviewee at ease, and increase the possibility for establishing a rapport, by keeping the early minutes relatively easy for the respondent. It also gave me a chance as interviewer to reassure the teacher about such issues as confidentiality and the purposes of the interviews, to explain what would be happening over the two days, and why, and to emphasise the process as a 'cooperative venture' (Powney and Watts 1987). In addition to these more basic details, however, we started to explore the teacher's memories of primary school; this helped to establish the context of her or his formative years, and gave early clues as to the subject's attitude to schooling under communism or apartheid, and feelings about how things had changed.

The second interview took place after an observed lesson. Its purpose was to triangulate my impressions of the lesson with the teacher's, and to place the events within the context of 'espoused theory' - that is, the teacher's expressed beliefs about teaching. In explaining why they behaved as they did in the lesson, and in evaluating its outcomes against the objectives they had earlier stated, the teachers had the opportunity to try to create coherence between their

aims and what actually happened: not always an easy task. Critical events were chosen for discussion on the basis that they might reflect democratic (or authoritarian) approaches.

The third stage usually took place on the second day, after there had been time to reflect on the results of day one. By this time, sufficient rapport had been established to be able to discuss issues of a more personal nature, and to request a more demanding level of reflection. Its purpose was to analyse the influences that the teachers perceived to be important in their practice and their attitudes to education. Based on the themes which emerged from the first fieldwork phase, these influences were divided into the personal, the professional, and the social, with a view to evaluating which domain seemed to be the most important to each teacher, and which categories might be most likely to affect a teacher's attitudes to reforming practice. Each teacher responded to a list of possible influences which other teachers had mentioned, assessing their relative importance, and then added his or her own ideas to the list. Obviously how one actually consciously assesses the impact of these influences may not be a wholly accurate measure of their full power, but for the purposes of this study the teacher's perspective of them was equally as important as an objective measure of their real sway - if such a thing could even be achieved.

The final stage of the interview process usually took place at the end of the second day, and involved a feedback session during which the impressions gleaned from the observations and discussions were outlined. We discussed the issues of pedagogy, influences, and reflection, along with any themes which were particularly pertinent to that case study. I also explained the PACE

typology of teacher responses to reform (Pollard *et al* 1994 - see literature review) and expressed an opinion as to where that respondent fit, and why. The teacher had the opportunity to respond to these impressions and to reflect on the case study process; again, it was important that a sufficient relationship had been developed that they might feel comfortable being critical. As it happened, disagreements were rare, and the teachers clearly found it fascinating to hear the impressions and to have themselves placed in the context of wider international research on the issues that they faced on a daily basis. In the process that each teacher was constantly undergoing to create a coherent narrative about themselves and their practice, such a perspective was probably a useful tool.

During the interview process, there was a constant tension between the desire to address the research agenda and keep the conversation in focus, and the desire to allow the teachers to speak freely on what they considered to be important, which might not have been predicted by the schedules. This is a tension in much qualitative research; as Tomlinson points out:

...anyone who gives serious consideration to (a) the active nature and idiosyncrasy of human understanding and language, let alone (b) the possibilities for social influence in the interview encounter, can hardly avoid a basic dilemma when contemplating the use of interviewing for research purposes. Namely, to the extent that they define and pursue their own topic, they may miss the interviewee's construals and reactions, which they precisely wish to obtain. On the other hand, to the extent that they facilitate emergence of the interviewee's perspectives and definitions of issues, they may fail to do justice to their own research agenda...it is clear that any strategy seeking to achieve the double aim of phenomenological validity and research agenda coverage is going to be relatively complex compared to approaches dominated by either one of these goals. (Tomlinson 1993: 155 and 174)

In order to try as far as possible to reconcile these competing needs, the schedules for each interview were 'hierarchically focussed' (Tomlinson 1993). This involved paring down the essential elements to be addressed, progressing gradually from very open to more closed framing while bringing in the perspectives of the interviewee as they spontaneously raised them, and generally using as non-directive a style of interaction as possible. For example, the question about the teacher's own primary school experiences was initially very open-ended ("Tell me about your own experiences in primary school"). After the teacher had explored the question according to his or her own priorities, and the initial, spontaneous reaction had been exhausted, prompts (such as "How would you describe your relationship with your teachers?") were used to encourage reflection on issues within the research agenda which had not been mentioned.

Cohen and Manion (1991) list trust, curiosity and naturalness as attributes of ethnographers as interviewers, and they were important to this research process, which employed aspects of ethnography. The first, trust, demands effort and time, as predicted by Woods:

...a 'credibility gap' can only be worked out by both parties over a number of meetings...one interview on its own in itself is almost worthless, apart from breaking the ice, for people will define the situation by standard indicators in ways to which they are accustomed (Woods 1986:67).

And, as Measor (1985) points out: "the quality of the data is dependent on the quality of the relationships you build with the people being interviewed" (p 57). Trust was essential as much depended on the interviewee's willingness to disclose quite personal information which one would not normally share with a

stranger. It is clear from the increasingly revealing nature of teachers' responses that trust did grow over time - and perhaps would have continued to do so if the decision to keep each case study to two days had not been taken. Ultimately, many of the case study teachers wanted to continue the relationship beyond the two days of intensive research, and further meetings and personal written communication went on with seven of the subjects. The second attribute - curiosity - was simply not in question: the very basis of the research questions and methods was my own desire to know about teachers' experiences in these contexts. The third - naturalness - was very important, as without it, trust would have been impossible, and the presence of a researcher in the classroom over two days would have been obtrusive, affecting the normal processes of classroom life. Davies (1997) states a preference for the term 'structured conversation', which captures something of the natural flavour which was the goal of the interview situations.

Interviews in educational research are rarely the stimulus-response, knee-jerk reactions noted in psychology. From the beginning they are a social event, and governed by a very complex set of social rules, understandings and obligations...This gives the essence of the two-way interaction, and underscores the fact that a relationship has to be established even for the simplest interchange to take place. That this relationship may be unequal, or contain power elements, does not detract from the fact that two or more people are talking, and using and interpreting language in a constant conscious and unconscious process. (Davies 1997:135)

After the initial questions, many of the respondents were quick to turn the tables, asking questions about my experiences and perceptions, increasing the naturalness of the encounter (if not its efficiency).

Long after the interviews, in listening repeatedly to the recordings, it became apparent that I was not adopting the 'neutral non-judgemental stance'

advocated by Tomlinson (1995), nor Measor's 'coming over' as "...very sweet and trustworthy but ultimately rather bland" (1985:62). That would have felt unnatural, and possibly even been counterproductive. My role in the conversation was very encouraging, and I tended to praise what were perceived as positive aspects of practice; it was also clear that there were high levels of interest in each teacher's story. While it was occasionally difficult not to cringe during transcribing, when listening over and over to the sometimes very effusive encouragement I gave to the teachers, it was not a strategy that was adopted as a tactic to get them to talk - it was a natural response. It was stimulated in part by a strong sense of empathy for the teachers. Despite the fact that their backgrounds and experiences were very different from my own, there was often clear common ground in their professional and personal priorities and struggles. Preston (1997) has also noted similar experiences in the process of interviewing rural women in South America. Fortunately my effusiveness did not appear to inhibit the subjects; conversely it seemed to animate and assure them, judging from how forthcoming they became. If it were not sincere this would most certainly not have been the case. Additionally, a research relationship such as this, which demands a close rapport with the subject and which extends over several phases, not only measures subjects' perceptions - it can very easily shape them as well. It would have been irresponsible to make teachers feel insecure about themselves and their practice.

Out of the twelve case studies, there was one situation - with Cindy in a township school in South Africa - in which a rapport did not develop between interviewer and interviewee, and the resulting data were definitely inferior.

However, it is worth reflecting on the circumstances, to attempt to understand what went wrong, both as a contrast to the other situations, and as a cautionary tale. The first and perhaps definitive problem was one of access. With the other cases there was a fair degree of control over the choice of schools and case study teachers; at bare minimum it was possible to state preferences and to indicate that the teacher must have volunteered and must understand what the project entailed. However, in this case, there had been no personal contact with the school; it had all been done through an indulgent stranger at an NGO, and rightly or wrongly I did not feel in a position to be vocal and insistent about these issues. Essentially, I was taken to a school 'cold', and the unsuspecting (and highly authoritarian) head assigned a teacher to work with me. Thus she was unprepared, and somewhat embarrassed, and while she claimed to be willing, the initial coercion no doubt coloured her view of the proceedings. She asked to see the interview schedule, and admitted that she felt the questions were 'very difficult - but maybe because I am lazy' - indicating both reluctance and insecurity. She claimed not to mind being recorded, but her one-word evasive answers and self-conscious giggles when the recorder was on made it clear that this was inappropriate, and it was abandoned. The whole school had a culture of negativity - a discussion with several of the teachers in the staffroom revealed widespread discontent. This same culture extended to the students, and I did not feel welcome among them. I had encountered racism of many kinds in South Africa, but this was the first example of open hostility, and it was from an 8-year-old boy who smirked and muttered as I went past: "One settler, one bullet". My 'otherness' in this culture was no doubt part of the problem, and perhaps despite reassurances there was the fear that there would be a racist and/or judgemental perspective to the study. This would be much

more worrying had the research not gone so well at other historically black schools in South Africa. Sindy made some admissions that indicated the extent of her classroom problems – she was open about corporal punishment, for example, and the fact that she did not want to be a teacher – but there was the distinct impression that this was the ‘tip of the iceberg’, and sufficient rapport did not develop between us to gain a clear understanding of her and her circumstances. She clearly had not thought about many of the issues we were discussing, and either did not have an opinion or was not comfortable coming up with one on the spot. She may also have been somewhat shy by nature – she interacted little with her colleagues in the staffroom. Whatever the real reason that trust did not reach the necessary levels, we managed to complete the interviews, and the brevity of her responses made it fairly easy to take notes. However, the experience highlighted the fact that interviewing is about human communication – and as such “...is a complex social process in which much more than information is being sought or communicated” (Simons 1981:33). Some of the ‘complex set of social rules, understandings and obligations’ (Davies, as above) at times are beyond the control of the researcher.

There are advantages to being a “cultural stranger” (Davies 1997). It puts one in a position to ask naïve questions, and to probe into areas which an insider might take for granted as much as the subjects themselves do. However, there are serious disadvantages as well: it is very difficult to access the more subtle cultural codes and understandings to which an insider is party, and one can never be sure to what extent meanings are shared. This becomes especially problematic when language is an issue. Only two of the case study teachers had English as a first language (Joy and Sunetra). In six cases, the research was

conducted in English, but it was a second (or third) language for the teacher, and levels of competence and comfort varied from near- native speaker proficiency (Mikhail and Ilse) to Tatyana's occasional frustration at not being able to express herself cogently.

With the remaining four Russian teachers, it was necessary to use an interpreter. I studied Russian language in evening courses over two terms at the University language centre; however, while facilitating very basic communication and an understanding of quite a lot of classroom discourse, it was certainly not adequate for the purposes of in-depth interviewing on sensitive topics. This was obviously a concern, as has been explored elsewhere (Schweisfurth 1999d). Firstly, and most obviously, no matter how good the interpreters were, they would inevitably mediate the discussion, and in the pressure of what was virtually simultaneous translation, make subtle adjustments to what was said. As Ercikan points out (referring in this case to test items): "The quality of a translation affects its accuracy in terms of meanings, connotations, and style" (Ercikan 1998:541). When I asked a question, the question was then translated for the teacher, and her or his response was then translated, allowing ample opportunity for the mechanics of 'Chinese whispers' to intervene and to cause slippage between what researcher and respondent intended and what was actually communicated.

I grew to worry less about this. Firstly, I had a great deal of trust in the interpreters. Students of English at the Perm State Pedagogical University, their English was excellent and their conscientiousness impressive. Fortunately, it was also possible to work closely in the second phase with two particular translators; we established a friendship as well as a working relationship, and

spent considerable extra time together outside of schools. This enabled us to explore the issues and questions in advance, to emphasise the importance of sensitivity in translation, and to 'debrief' after each case study in order to address any questions or go over any parts of the interviews which proved problematic. The fact that the interviews were recorded made it possible to ask a Russian speaker to listen to samples and verify that the interpreting was reliable. It was also possible after the event to seek respondent verification, which in this case helped to verify not only the findings but the language. After being written as a case study, the narrative about Natasha was re-translated into Russian and sent to her for verification. This does not mean that the same language equivalence problems could not have happened every time translation occurred, and they might remain an integral and problematic part of the text, as indeed they would have done if I had been able to conduct the interviews in Russian. But she felt that what she read was a fair and realistic reflection (her response – translated and in the original Russian – forms appendix five).

In any case, the problems of language and meaning are an inherent aspect of interviewing even when researcher and researched speak the same mother tongue; this is not to deny the importance of the issue of language, but it is more a question of degree than a problem introduced only when translation is involved. Slippage, misunderstanding and imposed meanings are part of any human interaction. In the event, I came to value the presence of the interpreters as 'key informants'. This is not in the sense that Burgess (1985) uses it - as actors within the case study who facilitate access and highlight important issues about the particular case - but in the broader cultural sense. Their experience of working with people from overseas, their upbringing within the culture of

education in Russia and their training in pedagogy, their excellent English language skills, our open relationships, and their willingness and helpfulness, all made it possible to triangulate our impressions and to gain an informed 'insider perspective' to complement my own comparative perspective (Crossley and Vulliamy 1997; Dyer and Choksi 1997). In fact, when conducting the case studies in South Africa, without the aid of such a perspective present during interviews, I missed it. Our impressions of people and situations did not always agree, suggesting that they were being open and honest, and making for interesting discussion about why we might see the situation differently, and forcing us both to interrogate issues highlighted in the interviews. It is quite likely that this facility has ultimately increased the reliability of the findings, which helps to balance the misgivings which remain about language equivalences.

The experience of interviewing in another person's second language also highlighted some interesting issues. Mikhail possessed highly fluent English and had travelled extensively in North America. What was interesting in his case was that there was a perceptible change in persona when he switched from Russian to English, raising issues of identity: whom was being interviewed? Was he the same person in English as in Russian? The interviews with him were the most openly critical of the changes at all levels: government, school, and society and youth generally. This may have been in part due to the privacy which we enjoyed, and in part due to his personality - or at least his personality in English! He was also a confident, highly-qualified senior teacher and a man, and these issues of status and gender no doubt played some part as well. However, the fact that he appeared to become someone else when speaking

another language raises questions about what might have been the effect if my linguistic fluency had been adequate to conduct interviews in Russian, Zulu, Sesotho or Afrikaans – who would have been doing the interviewing, and what effect might this have had on the data generated?

Classroom Observation

In the first phase of fieldwork, as many lessons from as many different schools and teachers as possible were observed. During the case study phase, most of the taught lessons by each teacher over the two-day period were observed; additionally, at least one lesson by at least one other teacher at the same school was attended in order to get a sense of the rest of the school and of how typical the case study teacher was in that context. I occasionally participated in lessons, but employed non-participant observer mode when focusing on a particular lesson.

An observation form was employed, based loosely on that used by Alexander in the *Five Cultures* study (see appendix six), and completed for at least two lessons from each of the case study teachers. Casual notes were kept on the other lessons. An open observation schedule, rather than a detailed, systematic one was used. Firstly, this was deemed more appropriate for a qualitative study. Systematic schedules are most helpful when one wants to generate quantitative data of the ‘teacher addressed pupil B x times’ or ‘80% of teachers use method A more than 50% of the time’ type. A classic example is Galton, Simon and Croll’s ORACLE study (1980), which used a ‘mass of factual data’ to analyse aspects of classroom life such as teacher-pupil interaction, pupil time-on-task, grouping patterns, and focus of curriculum, and employed statistical

techniques of clustering to demarcate a typology of teaching styles. Secondly, the closure demanded in the creation of a detailed observation schedule seemed inappropriate. It would have restricted observation to pre-determined categories – something I wanted to avoid, to allow for incorporation of the unexpected, and for a more holistic picture of each lesson and each teacher's practice.

In addition, in cross-cultural situations a fixed schedule seems unsuitable. When the observer (and creator of the schedule) is a cultural and linguistic outsider, it is all too easy to use categories which are appropriate to the researcher's home culture but not the one observed. In defending systematic classroom observation, MacIntyre and McLeod inadvertently highlight this issue:

...(the researcher)...is making use of the system of conventional meanings which is implicit within the culture to which the teacher and the pupils and he (sic) himself belong. Because he is a member of the culture, not a stranger, the observer is able to categorise classroom events on the basis of the shared meanings within the culture (McIntyre and McLeod 1986:15).

Unless one is very familiar with these culture-based conventional meanings, it is highly problematic to create an observation schedule; it would inevitably shape the findings to fit the researcher's own set of culture-bound understandings of classroom behaviour. A 'field notes' approach to recording observations does not necessarily avoid this problem. The categories may well be implicit in what is recorded, and the observer is much more likely to notice the unusual while the mundane, often just as important, goes unnoted (Wragg 1999). The subjectivity of the researcher's perspective is an acknowledged issue in qualitative research; the challenge is to understand it and control for it. In

attempting this in classroom observation, it is helpful to be as open as possible, and describe as much as possible of what is observed, and then apply a 'spiral of enquiry' (Pollard 1996) in interpretation in order to delay closure. This leaves time and opportunity for reworking of explanations.

In the event I attempted to write down everything possible, concentrating on the teacher's actions and responses. In discussing a lesson with the case study teacher, two approaches were used. Firstly, the teacher was asked what was important to her or him about the lesson, as a check against what had been noted, and we discussed the extent to which the aims and objectives had been reached, and which critical events had facilitated or impeded the outcomes. Secondly, I chose an incident to discuss, which, based on a flexible list derived from literature on democratic education, seemed to demonstrate either democratic or authoritarian teaching. Interestingly enough, the particular incident or approach was not always considered relevant by the teacher. However, it ensured that some comparability of perspective existed across cases, which had a foundation in something other than either of our distinct cultural biases.

Field Diary

For periods overseas, a field diary was used to reflect on general impressions of the country and culture, to record critical incidents outside of the actual interviews and observations, and to consider some of the issues that arose in the research. During the analysis stage, which occurred many months after the visits, it was helpful to be able to refer to this to remember the ideas, feelings and associations that were generated at the time about the context and the

subjects of the research. It also made writing the case studies easier. A large bank of photographs served similar purposes.

A few extracts are quoted as appendix seven, to give a flavour of the diaries. The language and tone are personal, and, rightly or wrongly, at times judgemental. The writing of them – often late at night after a long day – involved minimal academic ‘filtering’, and while the reflections were useful and helped later to recapture the freshness of impressions, they demanded further consideration after the events.

Documentary analysis

While in-country, any papers relevant to the national, local, school or classroom contexts were collected. Examples from each level would include newspapers, tourist information, school bulletins and prospectuses, and children’s work. Analysis of these documents complemented the information gained from the primary fieldwork sources.

* * * * *

The research methodology and field methods as outlined above generated data which were analysed on two levels: individual cases and across cases. In the following two chapters, these findings are described, starting with the patterns which emerged from among the studies.

Chapter Five - Cross-Case Findings

While case studies are intended to probe in depth the particulars of a given phenomenon within its context, the fact that this project encompassed 12 case studies of individuals means that it has been possible to extract general patterns from a cross-case analysis of the data. Here these patterns are explored, using quotations from the case studies to illustrate. Some of these findings have been published in *Education in Russia, Eastern Europe and the Independent States* as 'Teachers and Democratic Change in Russia and South Africa' (Schweisfurth 2000).

While many interesting aspects of teachers' lives, thoughts and practice were evident in the analysis of the case study interview transcripts and the classroom observation notes, one set of findings stood out. It became clear that teachers were facing a number of challenging dilemmas. As a result of these, they often spoke from contradictory, or difficult to reconcile, positions, or said one thing, and did another. Sometimes they were aware of these contradictions; sometimes they appeared to be unconscious of the irreconcilable differences that were part of their opinions and their practice. At the root of these inconsistencies were 'competing imperatives' (Alexander 1995) - teachers found themselves "caught between different versions of how they ought to act" (Alexander 1995:23). These opposing demands on their practice and on their thinking made a coherent perspective difficult. They also made consistency between 'espoused theory' and 'theory-in-use' problematic (Argyris and Schön 1976), and made classroom practice itself the site of occasional contradictions which reflected this confusion. Sometimes these competing imperatives were

related to values; it was a question of competing ideologies existing simultaneously in a teacher's expression of his or thinking, often an old orthodoxy with a new perspective. Sometimes it was more a question of tension between a consciously accepted ideology, and the practical imperatives of classroom survival. The fact that the teachers were generally in agreement that the reforms were, on the whole, a good and necessary move, did not make their responses any simpler. Studies have shown that teachers in many situations face such tensions. However, it was clear that for these teachers the post-communist reforms in Russia and the post-apartheid reforms South Africa had themselves generated many of the competing imperatives which they experienced.

How do teachers cope with these competing imperatives? In many cases, the competing imperatives in a teacher's discourse were only noticed in the analysis of the transcripts, indicating that the teacher may have been unconscious of them, or unwilling to admit to them. Upon occasion, however, some teachers attempted to reconcile these opposing positions, sometimes in response to a direct question about them. In these cases, reflection offered the possibility of coherence, even while it highlighted for the teacher the constant challenge of mediating barely reconcilable demands. While reflective teachers were sometimes able to create coherence through reflection, the greatest synthesising efforts were put into talking about themselves and their own lives, past and present as manifested in their opinions and their practice. When a given teacher's personal esteem was being compromised by a professional or societal demand, the prevailing pattern was to protect one's self.

Where reflection was not the medium for bridging the gaps between those competing imperatives, there were alternative routes. One was to deny - rightly or wrongly - the impact of the reforms; another was to interpret them in order to accommodate pre-existing perceptions and capacities. Frustration and demoralisation prevailed occasionally. Where the reforms were perceived to be imposed from above, forms of strategic compliance appeared, with behaviours governed by external demands of accountability. Sometimes the irreconcilable imperatives co-existed, creating strange hybrid practices, sometimes with built-in contradictions, incorporating persistent continuities with new approaches.

In this chapter, competing imperatives common to members of this group of teachers will be elaborated, and illustrated with quotations from the respondents. Teachers' responses to these equally powerful but opposing forces will then be outlined, sometimes with reference to fragments of lessons observed. Obviously, while the patterns which permeated all or most of the case studies were especially interesting, these were certainly not the only ones which appeared. Apart from those which were common to most or all of the teachers, there were themes which were concerns of only one national group, some which concerned a small group of teachers from either or both countries, and others which were entirely idiosyncratic to an individual teacher. It is not possible to elucidate all of the less universal themes, although some will be addressed, especially those which appeared fairly consistently within one national group or sub-group. The individual case studies documented in the following chapter will help to address this gap, as well as to show how the common themes were expressed in unique ways by individuals.

In order to help the reader identify the origins of the quotations, below is a list of the pseudonyms and some basic identifying characteristics of each of the twelve case study teachers:

<i>Russia</i>	
Anya	female teacher at an ‘ordinary’ (but innovative and award-winning) school; 10 years experience
Tatyana	female English teacher at a very ordinary ‘ordinary’ school; 12 years experience
Marina	middle-aged, female teacher in school for children with special needs; 6 years experience; receiving CPD training
Ludmilla	female teacher in a standard ‘ordinary’ school - special stream with ‘developmental’ approaches (ie enriched, based on principles of developmental psychology); 15 years experience
Mikhail	male English teacher in an ‘elite’ school, 25 years experience
Natasha	female teacher of ‘corrective’ stream (SEN) standard ‘ordinary’ school; receiving CPD training; 8 years experience
<i>South Africa</i>	
Ilse	female teacher of Afrikaner origin in Afrikaans-medium, historically-white school in affluent area, 20 years experience
Mary	female black teacher in project township school; 14 years experience
Sindy	female black teacher in poorly-resourced township school; 1 year experience
Oliver	male black teacher in rural multi-grade school; 18 years experience
Joy	female teacher of English origin, teacher in English-medium, historically-white school in affluent area; 15 years experience
Sunetra	female teacher of Indian origin in English-medium, historically white school with mixed race population; 1 year experience

Teachers and Competing Imperatives

On Being a Teacher

The respondents in this study clearly held particular ideas of what it means to be a teacher, which they expressed openly or communicated implicitly. Such conceptions have certainly always existed, and may always have had contradictions inherent in them. Additionally, however, the redefinition of teaching which has accompanied the reforms in both countries has meant that

either teachers have had to abandon long-held notions about teaching, learned tacitly through their own schooling and later in training and from colleagues, or somehow accommodate both the old and the new in their thinking.

Are teachers figures of unquestionable expertise and authority, or democratic facilitators of learning? To whom are they accountable, and from whom do they take guidance? Is a teacher's main responsibility to the details of daily classroom life and the immediate demands of their pupils, or to the larger aims of social transformation? Are teachers individuals who work in isolation, or should they act co-operatively as part of a collegial team? Where do parents fit in: should teachers be left alone to do their jobs, or should they be working in partnership with parents, whatever their conflicting priorities? And can all these attitudes and all the requisite skills be learned, or is teaching a calling to which individuals answer, and bring their in-born talents?

In terms of the nature of pupil-teacher relationships, the majority of teachers were in agreement that change was necessary, due to the overly-authoritarian nature of relationships embedded in the old system. This situation manifested itself differently among different groups in the study. For some of the Russian teachers, it was a question of distance and control.

... the teacher (then) should operate the children as if they were chess figures. (Natasha)

For others, this conflict was not so acute, as they believed that the change in pupil-teacher relationships was overstated - that warmth and mutual affection had always been an important dimension of these connections, and that such changes cannot be legislated.

...they are still very nice to children - the same. That didn't change. The teacher has a relationship with every child and suffers sometimes because of children's problems. (Anya)

Whether such statements are based on a clear picture of practice, and of the nature of the changes demanded, is difficult to ascertain. As was highlighted in the chapter on the changes in Russia, the fact that most of the personnel conveying information about reform and inspecting practice have remained the same as during communist times, means that the potential is greater for a shared understanding - or shared misunderstanding - of the nature of teaching and the expectations for change. The focus on the kind feelings between teachers and students may be misleading: the affectionate nature of relationships does not preclude an authoritarian base. Nor does an authoritarian base preclude some display of democratic practice: the presence and power of school councils during communist times, which included the active participation of students, appear to have few post-communist equivalents.

In South Africa, the case is stated more strongly when contrasting old authoritarian roles for teachers with the new, facilitator mode advocated by Curriculum 2005. The ubiquitous nature of corporal punishment is one factor.

It was very strict for us...but I was never touched by (my teacher). He used to spank us, but I didn't get it - quite an achievement. (Oliver)

They used to hit us. Yes, a lot...They struck fear into us and we learned in that kind of fashion. (Sunetra)

But tension remains, indicating that some teachers have not bridged the gap between authoritarian means of managing classrooms, and effective democratic practice, or at least that the balance is difficult to strike.

...I feel that on the one hand I am uncomfortable with telling them to keep quiet, because I don't want to tell them that, I just feel that...why don't you just do what I ask you? (Sunetra)

To me that's my biggest problem: I want them to listen to me while I organise them, but after that (laughs)...(Ilse)

In their perspectives, to what extent do teachers determine their own classroom modes, how much is dictated by outside forces, and what are these forces of prescription or guidance? Many teachers in both countries made clear the limited autonomy which they experienced under authoritarian government. Teachers were controlled and not encouraged to reflect on the nature of their practice and their relationships with children.

I knew there was something wrong. I could feel it. I went according to the rules because there were many rules, what to do, what not to do, and it was really putting you in a little box. (Ilse)

However, there were mixed responses in terms of present working conditions.

Some teachers made clear that they had much more choice that they used to.

Ah, yes! Freedom of choice is fully on, and that's wonderful. You used to be dead scared if you wanted to do something that wasn't prescribed - it was very prescriptive. You were dead scared to do something new because the inspectors in little grey suits used to march in. (Joy)

Now I see some of the drawbacks of this programme and I can change something in it; I see all the advantages and disadvantages, and I am able to change something using my own ideas. (Ludmilla)

However, not all the teachers felt free to teach in the manner they chose, and they felt pressure from authorities to conform to expectations. In Mikhail's case (as outlined in the next chapter), from his perspective, officials of all kinds, especially inspectors, essentially forced him into certain pedagogical patterns. In Marina's case, it was, and had always been, directors and deputies, who were the figures of authority.

The director is a person who can understand people, and so on, but there are times when she is peremptory, shows power...When I first came to the school there was a different vice-rector. There was almost a month when my lessons were observed, and there wasn't a single good word said to me. So I was absolutely desperate about my position as a teacher. (Marina)

Many teachers perceived a divide between their responsibilities to the children in their care, and their responsibilities to the wider society, and prioritised the former.

You see there's a certain situation when your aim is to work with children, and this is practically the main aim of your life. So your work is possibly affected by something but you forget about it because your main aim is your work, right now, right here. And so everything is forgotten that is not so important. (Anya)

Most were motivated strongly by their interpersonal relationships with children.

Rewards are easy. Happy faces and all the love - there are not many jobs where you are almost idolised. (Joy)

Those who expressed a desire to change society at large were the exceptions, although many were aware that reforms had set them this task.

The issue of partnerships - whether within the school or with the wider community - also created some dilemmas for teachers. On the one hand, they realised that functioning alone was not necessarily the best way to work. On the other hand, in reality, they found themselves on the whole to be working essentially in isolation from their colleagues, even when their collaboration was intentionally built into the reform implementation mechanisms. In Mary's school, for example, the 'cascade' model of in-service training was employed to attempt to reach all the teachers with reform information and suggestions for classroom practice; in actuality, they had little to do with each other unless they taught the same year, and little 'cascading' took place. The issue of relationships with parents - what Joy called 'parental involvement stroke

interference' - was almost universally raised as a problem, even the bane of the teacher's existence. Thus, in effect, most teachers felt they were working alone, but whether this was the best mode of working remained questionable.

One of the most important questions about the identity of teachers, when considering the implementation of major reforms which necessarily involve major adaptations in attitude as well as classroom practice, is the question of whether people are 'born to teach', or whether it is something that is learned through demanding processes of training and experience. If the attitude prevails that teaching is a calling which one is fated to answer, and that one's personality and in-born talents are the main resources and sources of inspiration, then it follows that externally-driven change which requires much unlearning and relearning, and substantial adaptation of one's self as well as one's practice, is likely to have difficulty penetrating to deeper levels of attitudes and pedagogy. For teachers who adhere to the 'calling' theory of the profession tend to see its demands as fixed, and either fitting with one's self, or not. On the whole, the teachers in this study did express the belief that teaching was something for which they had a natural talent, and gave this dimension more credence than anything they had learned anywhere. Some had always known they were meant to be teachers, while others had discovered that it was perfect for them after they started. And several noted that how they taught was an expression of their inner selves.

I always wanted to become a teacher; it would be difficult to me to become someone else. (Natasha)

I never dreamed of being a teacher. I graduated from the faculty of chemistry. I was rather shocked when I was asked to teach. But I loved the whole process of teaching, when I saw understanding in the eyes of pupils...I began to understand that it was vocation, my calling. (Ludmilla)

During apartheid, after apartheid, I was always me. How I teach comes from inside. (Joy)

This may have been one reason that many of them felt ambivalent about expectations and pressures to change.

Based on the above analysis, the competing imperatives facing teachers concerning the nature of teaching and their identity as teachers could be expressed as follows:

- Teacher as authoritarian/disciplinarian versus teacher as democratic facilitator
- Teacher as 'free agent' versus teacher as instrument of policy
- Teacher as nurturer versus teacher as agent of social change
- Teacher as independent worker versus teacher as team member
- Teaching as a 'calling' versus teaching as a learned professional skill

Pedagogy

- As has already been outlined in the country background chapters, the shifts in pedagogy since the consolidation of democracy in the two countries have been complex and contested, not least by teachers. In both pre- and post- elected government South Africa and Russia, a cocktail of influential ideologies has been present in policy and in practice. The origins of some of these ideas are quite convoluted, and reflect hegemonies beyond the national level. Often these have been reduced to the dichotomy of 'traditional' and 'progressive', or 'teacher-centred' and 'child-centred', and indeed most teachers use those or similar terms to describe the changes. They embrace within their definitions the loosening of teacher control, the de-formalising of relationships, and a focus on the development of the individual child. As we have seen, the manifestation in

policy of this general shift is slightly different in flavour in the two countries, but the similarities are remarkable. What is important here is that from the perspective of several of the case study teachers in both Russia and South Africa, the new approaches are seen to be at odds with classroom survival, on a number of fronts.

All of the case study teachers from both countries had themselves been taught, and all but two had been trained, under a system which placed the delivery of curriculum at the top of the educational agenda. The most straightforward approach to this priority, and the one advocated in general by systems of training and inspection, involved teacher-centred methodology, in which the careful apportioning of tasks and time was the responsibility of the teacher. The typical Russian teacher, for example, generally used a combination of lecturing, carefully-led whole-class discussion, and 'seatwork' done individually but common to everyone. Discipline was a matter of necessity, as each individual member of the class needed to conform to the quiet receiving mode of learning in order for all to benefit from it. This mode was still seen by a number of teachers as an essential dimension of survival in the classroom, and its antithesis, freer, less formal approaches, as potentially chaotic, if not carefully controlled.

On the one hand, a clear need for change was expressed by all but one of the teachers. They expressed it in varying ways, and in different degrees of vigour, with the South African teachers generally drawing a sharper line between methods of teaching in the past and the present.

From my own experience, I knew that there was something wrong. You were in a little box and you couldn't really reach out. Especially when you were creative. (Ilse)

Yeah, they were strict because there was no other way, we were so many. We were too many...but even if we were many in the class, they would not know what the others were doing, just go and play at the back of the class...

(In teaching pre-reforms)..I would have the textbook in front of me, doing the old methods, picking out all the verbs that I know and putting them down, doing drill work, and they just have to learn it. (Mary)

(On learning art in apartheid days)...my memory of that is that we sat in rows, with grey uniforms, and they would just tell us what to draw, like 'draw a butterfly today'. So we weren't given the freedom as they are today. The emphasis is now on what they are able to do, and what you are able to do. So, actually, I agree with it. (Sunetra)

Anything that smacked of fun was awful. (Joy)

When I began working as a teacher, the main aim was to give the curriculum, give the programme, the state programme. And for every teacher there is a need to fulfil the programme. (Anya)

...when I started working there was the system of raising hands and sitting very quietly, and although it was the normal thing they just couldn't do that, and I was really horrified. (Natasha)

Traditionally, we always told children how to do this or that. In the traditional method, there are no logical tasks...Of course, there are many different theories, but this (new) way they learn more deeply. (Ludmilla)

However, concerns with capacity for effective implementation of the changes to pedagogy were expressed on a number of fronts. Perhaps the most prominent - at least among the South African teachers - was the concern for discipline and the work ethic, when teacher control is loosened. Control of discipline was still regarded as essential in varying degrees to effective classroom management and learning, yet seen as ill-fitting with the spirit of the new pedagogy. Complicating this dilemma was the perception that self-discipline had worsened among pupils, and that teachers were suffering from a loss of respect. Again, the concern was generally stronger among South African teachers.

Yeah, the changes come but with the kids, there's no punishment for them. If there's no punishment, there's no discipline...

(later -)

...actually, they were far better behaved then than they are now. So it's different. I don't know...actually, when it comes to that I don't know what to do. (Sunetra)

And the other worrying thing that bothers me in our teaching and that is the discipline. On the other hand one can force them to be calm, but that bothers me a bit. You don't want this buzzing and talking but that is one thing that you have to sacrifice, I think. (Ilse)

When working with children, kindness is a strength of course on the one hand, because it helps you to find a common language with them. But on the other hand it destroys discipline in the class, at least it leads to it. (Marina)

The new methods are also seen as less efficient (efficiency in getting material across to children being another imperative), and it was also felt that less could be constructively achieved as potential exists for wasting time.

I don't know how it is going to work. I don't feel too comfortable in the sense that now it takes them so long to settle down. There they want them to work in groups...The problem is when the kids start talking and I know that here, even though I try to channel them in one direction, they are doing something else. So now if I put them in groups, will they be saying the thing that I want them to say, or talking about different things and just saying a few things to make me happy? (Sunetra)

Mostly they learn more and more, but I have the feeling and I am afraid that they are just sliding on the surface, not in-depth. Sometimes we don't have time to treat the problem in-depth. (Ludmilla)

Children's capacities and motivations are also not seen as up to the demands of pure discovery learning.

I'm more comfortable (with teacher-centred methods of presenting the curriculum)...It gives them a way to understanding what they are doing. And they enjoy it, you see. (Oliver)

They are ready to repeat, as parrots...They don't know the word, they are lazy to learn the new words, and then when I ask them 'what do you

think?’ - well, they look through the text, they find no answer there. (Mikhail)

I didn’t say find your own method (of solving maths problems), because the children can’t do that. A child who doesn’t have much maths savvy is lost. (Joy)

Pressures are also exerted from parents, creating imperatives which clash with new role definitions in classroom life.

The parents are up in arms...There was a meeting the other week, and they were very upset. They think the standards are going to fall, children won’t get into university, how are they going to study anymore? Some even call it a communist thing...(Ilse)

I know from last year, black parents told me ‘Please, you need to discipline my child, to hit them. Please do that.’ And I said no. (Sunetra)

Some teachers also admitted concern about their own (and especially other teachers’) capacities to enact the new pedagogy, with some blaming attitudes, and others a lack of adequate preparation. The stereotype of the inflexible older teacher prevailed, although it is not actually backed up by the cases in this study.

I think it must be terrible if you are a one track mind, or a person who can’t really let go. I think it must be so difficult for teachers to start this kind of thing. Because I’ve heard many teachers tell me ‘Oh, heck no, I can’t start this new thing. Do everything differently’. It’s hard for them. (Ilse)

I think a lot of the older teachers...I don’t think they want to retire. But they have the attitude that if you don’t do the work, then maybe we just shouldn’t worry about you, and we’ll just accommodate you, not make any big fuss...so ignoring them makes it even a bigger problem...I just hope that I’m doing the right thing. These days, this OBE and stuff...I’ve heard a little bit about it, but I haven’t studied myself...I don’t think they have given us the training that we needed (at the university). Things happen very differently in a normal school situation. (Sunetra)

The school generally is a very conservative institution, that’s why all the changes do not usually take place very easily here. There are a great

number of teachers who have a long length of service, and that's why it's difficult for them to perceive the changes. And change their attitudes and perceptions...it is difficult to teach children different things, for example from the Bible, and teachers just can't do that because they have no knowledge. It's not just the knowledge of teachers, but also their patience, their tolerance...(Natasha)

The lack of resources also competes with the imperative of effectively implementing the new curriculum through child-centred pedagogy.

We can choose a programme, we have the right, but (laughs) The school is badly financed. The school has no money to get visual aids or...so there is nothing new in the school because there is not money to buy. The teacher uses those things that we have managed to buy or find. (Ludmilla)

I write a plan for each lesson, but when you want to vary a lesson, make it more colourful and interesting for pupils, we have no such equipment...If I have 18 pupils in a group, I must write them all a task by hand, and I have 159 pupils. We need a Xerox and computer. It is very difficult. (Tatyana)

Many of the above dilemmas are related to those concerning the nature of teaching. The competing imperatives found within the realm of pedagogy:

- Teacher control versus pupil freedom
- Children as extrinsically motivated versus children as intrinsically motivated
- Knowledge transmission versus collaborative learning
- Content cover through efficiency versus deep learning
- Teachers' judgements versus external pressures
- Needs versus capacities (human/personal and resource)

Curriculum and Assessment

A number of the competing imperatives detailed above, those concerning resources, for example, overlap with curricular issues raised by the teachers.

Additionally, there are others more specific to the new, depoliticised (or repoliticised), or 'humanised' curricula introduced into each country.

One of the most profound changes to curricula in both nations has been the necessary rewriting of history. On the one hand, the rejection in curriculum of the values of apartheid and communism was perceived as an essential and positive dimension of change.

...people would not talk about things, you see. For instance, about the making up of history. Yeah. You wouldn't talk about it. But now things have changed. In the new South Africa, you are free to do all this. There is no more a political teacher and a non-political teacher. What you teach now is just relevant; before it was mostly irrelevant. (Oliver)

What would really be a distinctive change as a result of the change of regime would be in the teaching of history. For example, previously we would have done white heroes and heroines of South Africa. It was one of our topics. Now we have to reassess. That's not, for the children of the school, that's not a good and honest reflection; now we consider doing black and coloured heroes and heroines as well as the whites. So it's a whole different slant on it, where it was always history starting with the Cape Vortrekkers, with the farmers moving inland, setting up the cities, and how they fought with the tribes, not the black tribes' history. Now we will be doing that together now. (Joy)

The (English language) texts were all about *komsomol*, communism, and we had to follow one direction. About the communist party, about Lenin, there were many of them. (Tatyana)

However, the Russian teachers all noted that a gap had been left when communist ideals were removed, and that this vacuum of values was a problem demanding attention. The complete rejection of communism also distorted the historical perspective: many teachers felt that much could be learned from consigning it to history, not to ignominy.

There is less politics, if we can say so. The ideas and ideals of the former state, Lenin for example, things like that. The children have new wishes, new wants. New ideals, a new outlook. In the former days we tried to

bring the children up in the way of Lenin. The image of him is lost...People shouldn't now encourage us to avoid the name of Lenin because he was part of our history. Of course it is not so popular as it was in the old days, but still we are to acquaint our children with history and to tell that he was a leader of the communist party. (Anya)

Again, the shortage of resources compounds the problem. The long process of devising new appropriate textbooks, and the more serious issue of whether schools can afford them, make a transition to new versions of history problematic.

The problems are very difficult, we have no textbooks for history. It is very difficult you know, because all the textbooks are very bad. (Tatyana)

Some teachers noted the resistance - or at least apathy - pupils apparently felt toward the new curricula. Apart from not engaging with history, it was also difficult to bring them into discussion on issues newly allowed to be contestable.

...I think they are too young. I'm sure they would be, because they've only been into this whole new process for about 4 or 5 years now. The new generation, they are just going through the motions... (Sunetra)

The pupils were not alone - the majority of the teachers, while agreeing with the changes generally and endorsing the revision of the history curriculum to reflect changes in politics and values, were not themselves particularly inspired by politics and the grand narratives of reform and history.

(laughs) I'm not really interested in the reforms, and the politics and things like that. (Anya)

I care little for politics. (Mary)

Another difficult-to-reconcile tension within the area of curriculum lay between the new demand for it to be flexible enough to accommodate each child's needs, and the reluctance to give up the emphasis on fixed content and standards for all children to aim to achieve. On the one hand, teachers welcomed the

flexibility of choice in curriculum, and were pleased to be able to adapt it to the needs of the children in their classes. In both countries this was an entirely new phenomenon.

I think that one of the advantages of the reforms is that lessons have become more free. It used to be a strict system...Now there is a more flexible model and it can be modified...there aren't any definite and absolutely certain programmes which come from administration and from the Ministry of Education, so the teacher can make up her own programme and follow it. (Marina)

On the other hand, the opposite demand - to bring each child consistently up to the expected standard of a set curriculum - also exerted a powerful force. Sometimes this came from within the teacher, as an unconscious continuity from times of a fixed curriculum, or a reflective mediation of new approaches.

...we had some difficulties with this lesson, but we mentioned this material at another lesson. Well that part of speech we haven't covered very often, but this time it was a problem...But these are difficult tasks; new tasks that they are just learning...Well, you see we are working on a new programme, a new textbook...the exercises, they are so difficult, the Russian there is given is so difficult, not the way but the content is so difficult...I want to be sure of myself when I want to teach them in the third form. (Anya)

There were good things about the problem solving, the critical thinking, that I see. That's what impressed me. But at the same time, they said the children must find their own method. Perhaps eventually they would find - aha - here's a way of working it out. What I did was I gave them five different methods, and I said you can try these, help one another, here are six different ways of working it out. You choose one that you understand. That's my way of doing it. (Joy)

In other cases, it was a matter of forces outside the teacher exerting pressure to maintain standards, such as parental concern, particularly at the historically-white South African schools. Thus, in the case of curricular content and standards, the pressure came from a number of directions.

Thus, the competing imperatives concerning curriculum could be summarised as follows:

- Clear ideologised curriculum versus the unclear replacement
- Resource needs of new curriculum versus resource constraints
- Need for political education within curriculum versus disinterest or suspicion about politics
- Curriculum individualised versus common
- Personal development of individual students versus overall standards of achievement

* * * *

So, clearly, the teacher's task in implementing democratic reform was plagued by competing imperatives, which complicated their own visions of what it means to be a teacher, made introducing new pedagogy problematic, and raised questions about the appropriateness of new curricula. Despite the general consensus that, in spirit, the reforms were positive on the whole, their implementation was problematised by dilemmas. The task of being aware of them, and attempting to reconcile them, was a complex challenge.

* * * * *

Teachers' Responses to Competing Imperatives

How did teachers respond to the competing imperatives which they experienced and perceived? Outlined below are categories of response found among this group of teachers.

- *Reflective Mediation*

To some degree, all the teachers had considered the reforms and their responses to them. Some, however, were especially able to articulate a carefully-considered response, and it never involved full-scale compliance. Rather, in weighing-up the positive and negative sides to the reforms in curriculum and

assessment, and to the newly-advocated pedagogical approaches, they made conscious decisions about the degree to which they complied, to which aspects of the changes, and what form the balance of compliance and resistance would take. An example would be Ilse's watchfulness in keeping politically-motivated interference outside her classroom (see case study). Reflection can allow a degree of coherence among competing imperatives, but it cannot guarantee that contradictions and inconsistencies will not plague even those teachers who have struggled to resolve them. It can also, of itself, create stresses by highlighting the opposing demands on a teacher. And in these demanding times, even finding opportunities to reflect can be a challenge, and sharing ideas with other reflective teachers is problematic. As Joy put it:

Whoever's going to ask me how I feel about teaching?...I don't think of it naturally, until you asked me. And now I'm thinking. But no-one's ever asked me before. Especially teachers. They're so bogged down in their own lives.

Among these teachers, decisions on how to mediate the reforms were based to some extent on training, experience and reading; however, they were most often spelled out in a highly personal way. The teacher prescribed him or herself the role of gatekeeper, protecting the interests of the students, whom he or she knows and understands better than distant policymakers. In Marina's words: "I love everything new, but I can only use those which I find relevant to the situation, and completely adjustable".

- *Personal identity crises - and protection*

At the same time as protecting the welfare of their students, the teachers had a large stake in protecting their own interests as well. Having formed a personal and professional identity as a teacher under the old regime, it was difficult to

renounce it, as Natasha's embarrassment at her role in promoting communist values highlights (see case study). As Marina put it:

As you know, I was involved in communist organisations such as Komsomol, and of course it was a difficult period because I no longer felt needed, I wasn't wanted anywhere...so I thought that in all aspects of my life there were problems.

The issue of racial identities, loyalties and prejudices in South Africa was one especially difficult area for reflection to penetrate and reconcile. Joy's defensive shame in coming to terms with the complacently racist self she had lived with for so long was another example of a teacher trying to hold on to self-respect when values had changed dramatically. Oliver's comment on why he wanted to become a teacher was similarly revealing, in terms of where his loyalties really lay and where they should be: "...most of all, I wanted to help our blacks. Not our blacks, our nation". (See also Sunetra and Ilse's case studies).

From the symbolic interactionist perspective, the painful experiences of these teachers in trying to come to terms with a complete change in identity-shaping values are not surprising.

Over time, we learn to have feelings attached to the selves that we present to others. We come to care how others see us, and care about the positive social value we effectively claim through our performances...Our emotions are thereby mobilised in support of the interaction order that sustains those selves and claims...When events or information hopelessly contradicts the impression of self fostered by one of the participants, the definition of the situation that was governing the interaction is shattered...participants feel unruly, unreal, and anomic. Lodged in assumptions that no longer hold, all of the participants' projected selves and face are threatened (Charon 1995: 192 - 193).

- *Espoused Theory and Theory-in-Use*

In some cases, teachers were vocally very supportive of the reforms, yet their enthusiasm was not reflected in their practice. In one form, the teacher was

apparently unconscious of the contradiction between the opinions they expressed and how they actually behaved.

I won't be able to change if someone says basically now you are going to teach in a dictatorial manner, and children aren't going to talk to you unless they put their hands up...that's the sort of thing he (the headteacher) used to put to us, that the children don't shout out, that they put their hands up in the air before speaking. But as long as they're decent they can just speak to you. (interruption by students) Samuel! That's not what I want! Seated and reading. And Blaze and Gareth - on the floor. (Joy)

In other cases, the teacher re-labelled their practice in order to make it fit the pedagogical principles which they espoused. In reality, the evidence suggested that continuities were stronger than the changes, but they did not see it that way. Fitting a teacher into this category involves a high degree of judgement by the researcher, and at times it could be considered unfair to judge a teacher's practice in such a way as to contradict how they perceive it. Relativity is an issue; a teacher may have come a long way from their starting point in terms of democratic pedagogy, and yet to an outsider be deemed to be very conservative, and resistant to reform. In addition to bringing a comparative, and sympathetic, perspective to the judgement, I also attempted to access and understand the degree of contrast between words and actions by openly asking the teachers about any discrepancies observed, and to ask about how the same lesson would have been different before the reforms. One example of this problem of judgement concerning espoused theory and theory-in-use was the case of Oliver, who at the end of the two days disagreed with my perspective on his position on the reforms. He stated that he felt he was complying with the reforms because he believed in them, and that there was no resistance in him to any of the curricular and pedagogical changes. Yet he hated teaching the new history curriculum, because it was 'vague', and all his teaching that I witnessed

was based on his presenting material, the pupils doing individual work on it, and his correcting their work. When asked about this contradiction, he said:

I think it gives them a way to understand what they are doing. And they enjoy it, you see. They enjoy. You see, if you have to discuss things, they don't follow, you see...they think they are stepping into something very difficult.

He was starting to recognise in himself the tension between his desire to make positive changes, and his deeper attitudes to children's needs and his practice, and trying to find ways of reconciling them.

- *Persistent Continuities and Strange Hybrids*

The cliché about old habits dying hard was certainly borne up by the case study findings. Continuities permeated many lessons and were embedded in the attitudes of many of the teachers. This is not necessarily a bad thing; some of the teachers felt that many such continuities were positive, and that the other cliché about babies and bathwater was to be avoided. Note Ludmilla's comments on pupil-teacher relationships during and after communism:

I think that political and economic changes in our lives can't influence the relationships between teachers and students. Nothing will influence my attitude towards children...I hope that relationships between teachers and students haven't changed since then.

However, not all the continuities were due to positive choices. Some, such as that indicated by Cindy's comment below, were much less positive, and resulted from unreconstructed habit, or a perceived lack of viable alternatives.

If the children don't understand, I have to hit them with a stick. (Cindy)

Other examples, such as Sunetra's frustration at trying to achieve old goals through new means, were based on what was perceived as practical necessity.

If I don't have their attention I cannot do what I want to do, and they don't give me the chance to do it. So I just go straight ahead and do exactly what I need to do. We have a time limit for everything; there's only so much free time that I can give them. And if they don't do it in that certain time then I don't - If they just did what I ask them to do we'd have interesting lessons and I want to have fun lessons that are active. But we can't. (Sunetra)

Other comments, such as Anya's, showed how difficult it can be to even notice, let alone question, the routines to which one has been accustomed from a lifetime in schools.

Michele: I noticed that here were some quite fixed routines for the children. For example, how they should put their hands up, where their books should be, etc. In your mind, what purpose do these routines serve?

Anya: Well, it's just usual in the lesson. (laughs) Well, we've just been doing it forever! I've never thought about it. I just do it automatically, from my childhood. I'll have to think about it!

Sometimes, the continuities were mixed in with newer approaches. When this was done reflectively and eclectically, it had the potential to bring out the best of both. In Ilse's case, for better or worse, this was due to outside pressures.

But the school board decided that we must have some tests as well. They want children to study for tests, written tests. So we try to marry the two...I'm still giving them that factual base, they still have to write tests, but exams are worth maybe 20%, but this experiment would be 80%. So we're sizing it down a little bit, the testing of these little facts.

However, at other times it created some strange, unintentional hybrids with co-existing contradictions. There were many examples of students sitting in groups for an ostensibly collaborative exercise, but working individually. In one lesson observed in Russia, a teacher solicited personal responses to a piece of classical music: "What do you think were Tchaikovsky's feelings when he wrote this?". The democratic opportunity to creatively express one's opinion was very limited, though: one child who suggested that the composer might

have felt sad was peremptorily corrected and the teacher informed the class that he had not felt sad, but pensive.

- *Frustration and demoralisation*

When teachers were aware of competing imperatives, and could not resolve them, this sometimes led to frustration.

Actually, when it comes to that (discipline) I don't know what to do. Because for two periods in the morning they just do the things that I want them to do, and then by the afternoon I don't know how to handle them. And then they get restless, and I get restless, and I don't know who to concentrate on. (Sunetra)

The lack of resources, which, from the perspectives of many of the teachers, thwarted the demands of new curricula and pedagogy, were a particular source of frustration. As one of Cindy's colleagues put it:

We also feel for these kids because this Curriculum 2005 is very very premature in our situation. Before we could implement it, they should have enough classrooms, and enough resources.

Many of the teachers, and others in the countries concerned, expressed the opinion that younger teachers found the transition to democratic practice easier than older, experienced teachers. However, the findings of this study do not support this assumption; in fact, they contradict it. As Sunetra's case study shows, the less experienced teachers may not have years of habit to break, but they do have a long habituation in old values through the models of their own schooling, and they have a far more limited repertoire of solutions on which to call when they are faced with problems and dilemmas in the classroom.

In some cases, the frustration was too much for teachers. Two of the South African case study teachers, Cindy and Oliver, admitted that they were unlikely to stay in teaching, because of the frustrations of their working conditions.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, they were the two who identified least strongly with their jobs, and who worked under the poorest conditions in terms of resources and morale. There were many examples of other teachers expressing disillusionment. One very enlightening example was in a pedagogical university in Russia, where I led a seminar for students training to become English teachers. When asked why they chose teaching as a career, there was a great deal of uncomfortable mumbling and shuffling. Backtracking, I asked how many of them actually did want to enter teaching. Not a single student of the roughly 70 present would choose to teach if they had another option; as far as they were concerned, they were studying English, not education. This reflected a great deal about how difficult, and poorly rewarded, the teacher's job was seen to be - the students were demoralised about the profession before they had entered it.

- *Gaps and Vacuums*

Where the change to new curricula and structures had left gaps - such as the oft-mentioned Russian lack of alternatives to the social coherence and values education provided by the Pioneer, *Octobrist* and *Komsomol* organisations - the gaps on the whole remained. As Natasha put it:

There are some drawbacks. We forgot completely the past, but we do not have the present.

In Russia, the gap was probably a result of two factors. Firstly, economic crisis meant that many of the free activities provided under communism had to be phased out. Secondly, there was a certain lack of conviction about which values should replace those taught under the old system. While in South Africa, at least at the level of rhetoric, anti-racism and political awareness were given high

priority, in Russia, the situation was more ambiguous. Religion was one area where there was considerable uncertainty. Now that atheism was no longer the taught doctrine, what should replace it? And, as Natasha pointed out, who was to teach religious subjects, when no-one felt comfortable either in terms of their own knowledge or their own beliefs?

- *The Ostrich Response*

The PACE study (Pollard *et al* 1994) included the category of 'retreatism': the tendency to avoid dealing with the demands of reform, by denying its existence or impact. This might be the explanation for Oliver's conviction that he was complying with the reforms: he may have been either underinformed about, or chosen to ignore, the far-reaching demands that they entailed. Several of the teachers appeared to take refuge in the 'cozy' aspects of classroom life, focusing their attention on their rewarding relationships with students, and protecting themselves from the increased workload, persistent dilemmas, and necessary self-scrutiny of embracing change. Many teachers referred to teachers they had admired from their own primary schooling, and said that imitating their approaches was one of their main sources of teaching inspiration. Others denied to varying degrees the impact of the reforms.

Speaking as a whole, the curriculum is still the same...And (teachers) are still very nice to children - the same. (Anya)

This may have been true in terms of the real impact of the reforms, because of the mediation or resistance by teachers, but it was not their intention.

- *Strategic Compliance*

Exceptionally, the occasional teacher felt strongly that they had no choice about implementing the reforms, and that they would be punished if they chose not

to, no matter what their reason might be. Mikhail, whose case study follows in the next chapter, is an example of such a teacher, but the only one who openly admitted complying strategically, for his own protection, against his better judgement. One concern in this study was whether teachers would 'strategically comply' for the researcher. It was one of the reasons why two days was spent with each teacher; I felt that no-one, no matter how strategic, could (or would bother to) sustain an act for two full days. However, the subtle shifts in some teachers' approaches between the earlier and later lessons suggested that to some extent they felt pressure to use and display innovative approaches which they did not necessarily employ on a regular basis when not being observed. This form of compliance may have extended to other observers, especially those in authority (such as head teachers or inspectors).

* * * *

This chapter has outlined some of the patterns which appeared among the case studies, patterns which suggest that teachers' experiences of democratic reforms in education in Russian and South Africa have been troubled by competing imperatives which make a coherent and comfortable attitude and consistent practice difficult. These appear in the questions of teacher identity, and in pedagogical and curricular issues. In their responses to the reforms and these dilemmas, teachers have developed a range of strategies - some more conscious than others - to cope with the demands. These extend from pro-active reflective mediation, through sometimes purposeful and sometimes accidental mixing of approaches, to outright frustration which, in its extreme forms, amounts to 'giving up'. We now turn to the case studies of five individual teachers to cast further light on these imperatives, and how they have been addressed.

Chapter Six - Case Studies

The choice of which individual teachers to choose to write about in more detail as case studies was not an easy one. Each of them warrants attention to the particulars of the case study; each is unique in her or his own way. For each teacher, a singular combination of life history and contextual details puts a different spin on the imperatives common to all which were outlined in the preceding chapter, and issues which do not fit into such schemes are equally influential.

However, there is not space to detail 12 individual cases here, so some criteria needed to be applied in the selection of which cases to present. Firstly, I considered it important to present cases which illuminated some of the common themes which emerged from the analysis. Secondly, I have attempted to show a range of experience and contexts in terms of teachers' length of service, school situation, gender, and, in the case of South Africa, race. Neither of these first two criteria are meant to suggest that the individuals chosen are representative of the groups or opinions to which they adhere; rather, the case studies presented are meant to illustrate how themes which recurred throughout both phases of the study are manifested in the experiences and perceptions of individuals. Thirdly, cases which had important aspects which were entirely unique were also chosen, in part as an important caveat to the generalisations made in the last chapter, to emphasise that along with the commonalities, differences also prevailed. Finally, three of the cases were eliminated because the quality of data was considered somewhat less reliable. Marina and Sindy appeared uncomfortable with being recorded, or circumstances at times made it impossible or inappropriate, and I chose mainly to take notes instead, while

Tatyana expressed the concern that in the interviews, which were conducted in English, she wasn't able to communicate her ideas as cogently as she would have liked.

With these criteria in mind, the following cases will be elaborated in this chapter:

South Africa:

- Sunetra: a young Indian teacher with one year of teaching experience, working in a rapidly-changing inner-city school with mainly black students. Her case sheds light on the competing ideas about teaching, teachers and childhood, and her experience as a member of a racial minority in her school raises issues of the importance of racial identity which also permeated the discourse of all the South African teachers.
- Ilse: a highly-experienced white teacher of Afrikaner origin, working in a suburban Afrikaans-medium school with predominantly white pupils. She had reflected extensively on the nature of the political and educational reforms, and her classroom was part of a pilot implementation of Curriculum 2005. Like many teachers, her motivation and concerns were highly personal.
- Mary: a fairly experienced black teacher working in a township school. She had powerful sympathy with the nature of the reforms, but like most teachers in the new South Africa, she had no experience of democratic modes of teaching. She too took her job very personally. Unique in this group of teachers, she was inspired and guided by strong religious beliefs.

Russia:

- Natasha: a fairly experienced teacher of a lower stream class in an ordinary school. Her case illustrates some of the facts of living with reform: the mixture of continuities and change, and unresolvable mixed feelings about some aspects of the changes experienced since *perestroika*. Yet like many of the Russian teachers, she was pragmatic: her job was to rise above these tensions, and she focused on details of pedagogy. She was receiving special training and was regarded as a highly-professional teacher.
- Mikhail: a very experienced teacher in an elite school specialising in language education. His opinions on the political, social and educational reforms reflect some concerns expressed by other teachers, but are quite unique in their strength. The perceived conflict which he experienced with officialdom resulted in a form of strategic compliance.

The cases are presented as narratives, with the detail arranged in roughly the order in which it emerged from the four-part interview structure, interspersed with observations of lessons. The choice of details and quotes and how they are ordered and expressed is partly governed by the themes which were felt to be worth emphasising in each case; however, in the main, the intention is to let the reader make the connections to the patterns outlined in the previous chapter. The narrative format is especially important in that it allows the reader to see how these patterns work within the context of individual teacher's stories, and the web of influences they experience. In the same spirit, there is a wealth of detail in each case which begs further comment, but priority has been given to

the teacher's own words. There is, however, a brief summary at the end of each case, highlighting how it might fit into the more general themes. Since the interview and classroom observation data are fixed in the specific time in which the fieldwork took place, the descriptions of the teachers and their circumstances are written in the past tense; however, much of what was heard and observed may well still be true or could still be true, and it is assumed that what is described is still relevant to the current situation in the country.

Sunetra

In early 1998, Sunetra was teaching at Southside Primary School in central Pretoria. During the apartheid years, Southside had been an all-white school catering for the relatively less affluent population (relative, that is, to other white residents of Pretoria) occupying the flats in the surrounding neighbourhoods. It retained the facilities of that era, including large lawned playing fields and a swimming pool, and many of the staff members, including the head and deputy head, had remained with the school through the changes. The student population, however, had changed dramatically. When the apartheid-era laws were changed which had forbidden black people to reside within Pretoria, many who were able to afford it flooded in from the townships, one of the motivating reasons being access to better-equipped and -staffed schools like Southside. Five years previous to the study, Southside had catered for 400 white students; at the time of the research, it had nearly 1000 students, approximately 85% of whom were black, with the rest divided among white

(mainly), and Indian and coloured students. There was still a very long waiting list to get in.

On meeting the head, I specifically requested to work with an Indian or coloured teacher, if there was one on staff who was willing, since up to that point and in the foreseeable future all the case studies were either black or white. He and the deputy suggested Sunetra, a young teacher of Indian origin who was new to the school that year. She had had one year of experience teaching in an Indian secondary school the year before. Because the school facilities were not built to accommodate the large numbers of students, Sunetra taught in the auditorium, replacing the classroom set-up after each assembly. She taught a range of subjects to a number of different groups of children in year 6, specialising in Afrikaans language, history and art. Sunetra agreed to participate, and we had the chance to talk about her background and plans for the day before her first lesson.

Sunetra immediately asked whether I'd been to an Indian school. I hadn't, and asked her what her experience was like teaching in an Indian secondary school the year before. She replied:

Well, it was different I suppose...I came from a different situation altogether. It wasn't like when I was in school, and I was in school only 7 years before that. Things had changed quite a bit. There were discipline problems and things like that. So I don't know. I was prepared for something that I had gone through, and when I came into the situation, I was really shocked. It took me a little while to settle down. And figure out how I could cope with it. It was actually quite difficult because it just didn't work. You know I tried everything. They just have different goals in life...I just didn't think Indian people were - I had never come across Indian people like this.

Sunetra grew up in a tightly-knit Indian community in Natal (now Kwa-Zulu Natal), where things were different: “I think the teachers that we had, because we had a small community, in some way it helped the kids to be more disciplined because the teachers would be in contact with our parents...” She had also been trained in Natal, and did her practice teaching at her old secondary school, which reinforced this setting as the standard for the discipline that she considered so important.

In describing her own primary schooling in this setting, Sunetra noted the contrasts in acceptable teaching styles between then and now:

Well, we had a normal teacher who taught from the board, and you just learn from them. And open your books. It's different here, where you have to talk to them, relate things to their personal experiences, discuss things with them...In geography, we have to understand the whole concept; we have to explain it in their terms. It was different in our case. When I was taught geography, we were just given notes.

They used to hit us. Yes, a lot. Even though I think compared to now they had nothing to hit us for, because we were totally different from these children. They struck fear into us.

As was true for a number of those in this study, teaching ran in the family: her father and uncle were both teachers in the school she attended. She had fond memories of the extra-curricular activities which were organised through the efforts and expense of the community - in contrast to the expectations of the children she was currently teaching.

Like, this school has a pool and stuff like that. We didn't have one; we used a public pool. So we had extra-curricular activities organised. We went on excursions. Like, my dad was teaching in the high school, when I was 4 or 5, and we went with students from his school...to the Kruger National Park. These were things that were done by the community, by the Indian community. Wasn't done by anyone else. Money didn't just come from the department or something like that. So if they took that initiative to do things on their own, I think anything is

possible. And whereas the black people were saying 'oh you know no-one's giving us anything; that's why we're in the slump we are in'.

Sunetra's concerns with children's discipline and teachers' authority did not end when she left the secondary school the previous year. It was a major concern in her new post as well, and she found that when it came to strategies for dealing with difficult children, her hands were tied.

...the changes come but with the kids, there's no punishment for them. If there's no punishment, there's no discipline. I mean you don't have to kill the child but...I think there should be some kind of punishment. I was actually surprised that children are so comfortable being sent to the office...there is no fear with these kids. They are happy to go, they are happy to be suspended. They are so comfortable with it. It actually worries me, do they actually realise what implications it might have for the rest of their lives?

There was a kid, an incident that happened last year, where the child swore at one of the teachers. He was reprimanded for it, and sent to the principal's office, and he sat there and takes out a cigarette in the principal's office! If he could do something like that with him, what could he do with us teachers? And we have very little authority over them. So they suspended him for I think 2 weeks, and he was back in school in 2 weeks. So what lessons did they teach to him?

After lunch, it took 10 minutes to start the art lesson, as many of the 33 children were unsettled. Some of them were preoccupied with the police notice being sent home to parents about child abductions in the area - such violent events were becoming even more commonplace throughout the country. The art project - to make Valentine's cards - was greeted with enthusiasm: "Yes!" "Yeah!". The children were free to design and produce the card for whomever they wished, in any way they wanted, with the materials they had available. Most of them waited for paper while she repeatedly told two children to sit down, and others to be quiet; they ignored her, even when she said quite sternly: "We are doing art now; I insist that you sit down." Eventually she ignored them. The majority started working on their cards, many talking

quietly to pupils around them while drawing. There were constant questions, and requests for help, such as “Miss, how does Valentine’s spell?” Sunetra worked with the individuals, trying to watch the rest of the class at the same time. One incident resulted in one boy being told to kneel at the front of the room, facing the blackboard; another, who called out to him teasingly several times, was asked to do the same. The two giggled together, and asked persistently: “Can we go sit down and do our work, ma’am?”, which Sunetra ignored; after about 10 minutes they were permitted to re-join the class. Sunetra went from child to child, looking at their work, and showing particular enthusiasm for cards which were done using materials other than the standard paper and coloured pencils (such as one which incorporated pencil shavings). Several pupils joked together about who their Valentines were for. When she tried to collect the cards at the end of the lesson, some were shy about giving them to her for this reason, others want to keep working on them, and a few had produced virtually nothing. The next class started coming in before all had relinquished their cards.

In discussing the lesson with Sunetra, I expressed the opinion that despite the minor rebellions of a few, it seemed that most of the children were pretty much on task and that they listened to her, and that it can be easy to be preoccupied with the “one’s who aren’t doing what they are supposed to”. She noted:

...my main objective is to get them to do the work. If you look at their books, some of them just write one word or something; those are the ones that I’m worried about. While I wait for them, the rest of them are getting bored because they are way ahead. So I need to figure out how to balance that off.

She was, however, reasonably pleased with the lesson. Art was her “real passion” - she did her first degree in visual arts and had done occasional work

as a commercial artist. If she left teaching, it would probably be to pursue a career in this field - and she seemed somewhat tempted. Again, she found that discipline issues interfered with her goals for the lesson, and in teaching art generally.

I don't want to show them what to do. I want them to show me what they can do...And slowly as the year goes by, I want to get things that interest any one of them...I've actually had them drawing outside. But I need them to be disciplined enough...so that they know exactly how they should sit down and concentrate on what they are doing.

I like them just the way they are. Well, I guess it's mainly the discipline. But on the other hand I think that it's an outlet...I don't want to restrict them too much, to be too quiet. Because that's not what art is.

She had other views of children as well, showing a quite different perspective on them beyond her exasperation at trying to maintain authority, and revealing a struggle with balancing the two perspectives.

I've been told by both my father and my uncle that I shouldn't do it because I wouldn't handle so many children. But children are children, and I'm happy with them...although these are naughty, I just feel that they have something to teach me, and they are not restricted in any way. Their thoughts just flow and I notice they are very hands-on. One kid came and asked me if I would hug her. And I thought, you now, what is wrong? Then I realised that I've been in a situation where there was no feeling between me and anybody else, it was just a job that I did and these are the people that I was supposed to teach and then when I came here it was more hands-on, they wanted to know me on a personal level...it felt very good.

I try not to impose my views on them. I do understand that they are children...I told them as long as we do work, then we play. I can accept that. But if we don't do work and we play all the time, then I will not accept that. Lucas, on the other hand...He doesn't do anything. While I'm telling him something, he'll be telling me something else. And it's always somebody else's fault. I cannot handle him for too long.

Lucas upset her particularly in one instance, and this reminded her of her family's experiences with inter-racial relations.

And then he told me I was racist. So I told him that I would not have a discussion about it. Because he is not somebody who could judge me in any way. I became rather angry at first, and then I said, 'no, this is a little child. He doesn't even know what he's talking about.'

My family owns a shop in Newcastle. We have to do things in a certain way or people will come and tell you you are racist. I know we are not; we have a lot of customers and we treat all of them the same. We are civil to them, we talk to them in the same way...Sometimes they get a bit arrogant, and swear you and stuff like that but I think we handle it well.

She told her family's history, which resonated with that of other Indian South Africans. Her grandfather came from India to work in the sugar cane fields, and slowly worked his way up into his own watch-repair business, which her family has expanded into several shops. The family suffered many setbacks, many of them related to persecution by the apartheid government, but Sunetra was proud of the resilience and self-reliance that allowed them to build up the successful business.

She acknowledged that it would be a very long process of recovery from the apartheid years and the attitudes they embodied and encouraged. She had similar feelings about Outcomes-based Education, and was not convinced of its viability, again because of doubts she had about pupils' capacities to learn without strict guidance from an authority, and she had adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

I don't know how that is going to work. I don't feel too comfortable with it in the sense that now it takes them so long to settle down...The problem is when the kids start talking and I know that here, even though I try to channel them in one direction, they are doing something else...So I don't know if I would buy into this whole thing.

The next day, she taught a lesson in history about the wars ensuing from the Dutch settlement of Natal in the pre-1840 period. The material was from a new textbook. Sunetra presented the content as numbered points on the board:

1. When the Voortrekkers settled in Natal they named the area south of the Thukela River the Republic of Natalia.
2. The Zulu Kingdom was North of the Thukela.
3. There was not enough land in Natal for the black people there as well as the Voortrekkers.
4. The Voortrekkers tried to make the black people move south of the Mzimkulu River...

I commented that the children seemed to “accept these things as neutral facts”, that there “seemed to be a lack of empathy”. Sunetra replied:

That’s because I think they are too young. I’m sure they would be, because they’ve only been into this whole new process for about 4 or 5 years now. The new generation, they are just going through the motions...I want them to go and ask their parents. Because our history books are being written again. I’m telling you they just can’t....History is actually being made right now, and they are oblivious. They are young but it does not mean they have to just go around and let life pass them by. We’ve done that, and it was bad. We just accepted everything.

She later compared that day’s version of the lesson with the version that she would have received as a pupil.

Ours was mostly notes, from the Voortrekkers point of view, rather than bringing in the black point of view. So it was just one-sided...The textbooks were written by white people, and all our teachers had to do was teach it to us. All we learned was that the black people were really violent, and savages. They came across as being violent people and I think that’s the fear that we had with black people, we were just frightened of them.

On that day, the school day was shortened to accommodate the weekly meeting of teachers who work with the same year groups, to discuss shared concerns and how OBE principles might be integrated into their lessons (at this stage, OBE had not formally been implemented at year 6). One team member was missing and – to no-one’s surprise on a hot Friday afternoon - the other teachers admitted to a lack of motivation for the meeting. They loosely discussed issues around a few students, and then went home as soon as it was ‘safe’. The remainder of the interview took place in Sunetra’s flat nearby.

She spent a lot of time discussing her family; she was very close to her sisters in particular. She contrasted her younger sister's school with Southside, the former being an elite school which emphasises standards, discipline, and the development of a rounded individual: very much a classical education, and she obviously approved: "I'm glad she's in a place like that. It teaches her a lot of things...her standard of education is what we want."

In discussing her own higher education, race again was a prominent theme.

...it was going downhill from the time I was there. I know we went on boycott for two years in a row because they weren't paying their fees and we had to suffer. We had to accept 60% black, and the rest, white and Indian, 40%. And it seems the black kids weren't paying their fees...and the ones who end up paying are the ones who are paying their fees every year.

...the only time I actually got angry with a black person was then. Because I had applied for a bursary, a trust...he interviewed me on several occasions and asked me the same questions over and over again...he says no, he has to sit and think about this and I said "you just keep your money".

She also felt that her identity as an Indian affected her relationships with colleagues at the school.

...although at the start here people were nice and stuff like that, I do know that I'm different...Penny and the other lady, they belong to another culture, and they have each other. I just feel that I'm on my own. I need something that I can relate to, and their lives are just different...we are what we are. Here they haven't made me feel uncomfortable but I do know that I am different. And the way we think is different; they way we do things is different.

She was open about her desire to change her own approach in the classroom, although she wasn't sure how she would manage to do so. The tensions between her desire for a more relaxed atmosphere, and the chaos and time-wasting that she felt would ensue, left her at something of a loss.

I need to change the way I teach...I want there to be more fun.

Michele: Why do you think you haven't done that?

Because of the attention span of these kids. If I don't have their attention I cannot do what I want to do. We have a time limit for everything; there's only so much free time that I can give them...If they just did what I ask them to do we'd have interesting lessons that are active...and I haven't done that...I just don't know how.

In her opinion, the training she had to become a teacher was inadequate to help her to cope with such dilemmas.

I don't think they have given us the training that we needed. Things happen very differently in a normal school situation. The practical side is very different...we did our teaching practical for 6 weeks, but you still have it in your mind that somebody else will have to take over this class...your ultimate goal is just to get that little piece of paper that says you have passed your teaching practical.

She mentioned the positive influences of a teacher whose style she admired - one who had a lot of respect and discipline. She felt that these values would always be worthwhile - "I don't think that will ever change". She also acknowledged the faith that the administration of the school had in her as a very positive influence, giving her confidence. Among the other influences she cited was her respect for alternative forms of schooling - such as Montessori - experienced by some members of her family. She attached a lot of credence to the potential of schools to influence pupils; she said that the Montessori experience had 'made' her cousin.

The effect of her upbringing and continuing relationships with her family permeated her discussion of the major influences on her. Even when she was stressing her individuality, it had roots in her family: "I live my life on the edge - more like my mom, a little like my dad".

The political and social changes since the end of apartheid cued some interest, but she expressed less enthusiasm and considerably more ambivalence for them than for the more personal interests and influences in her life. Politics seemed to be associated with protests:

I'm interested in it, but that's as far as it goes. I don't take an active stand, I don't go marching. The only marching I've gone for (laughs) is the one last year for raising teachers' salaries. And that was out of curiosity.

Nor did she see raising political awareness in her pupils to be an important part of her job, despite her earlier comments about their lack of interest in history. She ultimately brought politics and the imperatives of creating social harmony to a personal level:

People just have to sort out their own feelings. I know how I feel, and I'm comfortable with the way I feel.

She had done some volunteer work giving art workshops with children in the townships, and found that life there was more 'normal' than she had expected, and that she was able to communicate across language as well as race barriers. She also felt that a major shift in herself was the fact that she had started to overcome her feelings of inferiority to white people.

I came here this year and it's the first time that I've had to teach white children. I know usually I would have been intimidated by white people, white children. This has actually helped. I remember the first time I spoke to Mr Collins; I was amazed that I could be so comfortable with 3 white people in the room.

Slightly taken aback at this revelation, I discussed with her what this meant for the interview situation. She certainly seemed comfortable and open, and stressed that she was, but explained that for her such feelings of intimidation were 'natural'.

In the final part of the interview, Sunetra responded in agreement to a feedback summary which elaborated on her role as mediator of the reforms, and the importance to her of her personal (especially family) relationships, and the attempts to break out of the social codes into which she was born and to help others to do the same. She acknowledged the tensions she was experiencing between maintaining order and allowing pupils' freedom: she hoped that experience would help her to resolve this persistent dilemma. She saw herself as a new teacher with much to learn, but guided by good intentions, giving her a very special role and responsibility in this period of flux and for many years to come - if she stays with it.

* * * * *

Sunetra's case highlighted and reinforced a number of important themes. Firstly, her responses as a relatively inexperienced teacher help to refute the common wisdom that young teachers by nature find it easier to adapt to radical change than older teachers do. Her own schooling experiences had set powerful examples of what was normal and desirable in education, and her lack of teaching experience gave her a limited repertoire of choices in how to respond to the demanding situation in which she found herself. Her inexperience and her worries about control and discipline match the findings of other research, but also reflect concerns held by many of the teachers: concerns which they linked to a general decline in pupil respect for teachers, and the problematics of changes to less formal pedagogical practice. The competing imperatives of *teacher as authoritarian versus teacher as facilitator*, and *teacher control versus pupil freedom* were very much in evidence here. She also struggled

with a number of the others: *teacher as nurturer versus teacher as agent of social change; teacher as independent versus teacher as part of a team; teaching as knowledge transmission versus collaborative learning; and the need for political education versus her own ambiguities about politics and about children's capacities for it.*

The way that race permeated virtually every issue she discussed was typical of the South African teachers. In her it was manifested in a strong identification with fellow Indian South Africans, and a heightened consciousness of how she was different both from her pupils and from the other members of staff. She had notions of what it meant to be racist, and considered herself well outside of them. She also shed light on key origins of ideas about the 'other': in her case, her education and upbringing had taught her to fear blacks and to feel inferior to whites. As with most of the teachers in both countries, all of these issues she ascribed importance at a personal and inter-personal level, marginalising the power of politics and her own role as a change agent in society.

The story of herself which she constructed over the two days was held together by a number of cohesive themes: her strong relationships with her family; her talent for, and love of, art; and her frustration at being constrained in trying to implement child-centred pedagogy, even though she wanted to.

Ilse

Pieter Van Wet Primary School was situated in a very affluent suburb of Pretoria. The surrounding neighbourhoods contained almost exclusively very large detached dwellings. With few exceptions these were surrounded by high walls and gates, with extra security in the form of razor wire fencing and notices

of armed response guards on patrol. Under apartheid they had been the homes of Afrikaner and English white South Africans; among them, however, were a few embassy residences, meaning that, exceptionally, there were also a few non-white residents even then. The majority were still white, although a few successful non-whites had moved in.

Pieter Van Wet, an Afrikaans-medium school, in 1998 served 600 pupils from the community. Under apartheid it had been exclusively for white pupils; it subsequently accepted others, but, at least in part because of the language of instruction, it was less popular with non-whites than the English language school nearby. Tuition fees were also relatively high. The school grounds covered a large area, and in addition to classrooms included an assembly hall, a computer room, sports fields and a swimming pool.

I had met and interviewed the head the year before. The school was a pilot school for OBE, and by all accounts, including those of teachers from other schools, it had made large strides in implementing the new curriculum throughout the school, and was collaborating with a university education faculty to monitor the process and facilitate training. The school had embarked on this course despite the reservations of an “extremely conservative” parent community, and some doubts among some staff members. Mr Muller suggested that I work with Ilse, a grade four teacher, who was known as one of teachers most enthusiastic about the new approaches. Additionally, she was an English teacher (along with science), which would facilitate the research.

Ilse had been a teacher for 20 years, four of those at Pieter Van Wet. When I met her, she immediately made clear a sentiment which she reiterated often over the course of two days: "For 20 years, I knew that there was something wrong in education". We had a few minutes to discuss an overview of her beliefs in education - which included a focus on the whole child, teaching children to no longer accept without question what was told to them by authorities, and a desire to nurture curiosity in children, especially about the natural world. It was her belief that most teachers felt similarly, but that many parents did not. We then attended the whole-school assembly, which included the singing of religious songs, and an inspirational talk by the headteacher.

In discussing her own upbringing in an Afrikaner mining town in the Transvaal, she admitted that she couldn't remember much about her own primary schooling: "It wasn't very exciting". Her family was poor - "below middle class...the Afrikaner were really poor when I was young" - but well-educated. Her mother was a strong influence on her, for her liberality, and her grandmother for her love of nature, while her beloved father was a different sort of person. Her feelings about them reflected her own values:

...my mother was quite a bit of a liberal, and I think I got some of those ideas. She always gave us free speech. My father on the other hand was a staunch staunch staunch government man, and into politics, and he was to me very narrow-minded but I love him a lot. But he came from a Free State farm and he was very right wing in a way.

I think I'm very observant. I think I got that from my grandmother...She was a wonderful woman. She would, when she was working in the garden, call me and say 'Look at this', and there would be an insect eating another insect.

Having grown up with a mother who was the exception to the rule, her first encounter with groups of people who held more liberal opinions was at teacher training college. She and all her brothers became teachers for the same reasons:

...the standard thing was that children from poor families became teachers...it gave you something to become a teacher. I never said to myself 'I'm going to be a teacher'. The only way I could go and study was through the education department had a bursary and you had to work for them for four years after that. That's how it worked. And that's the only way you could afford to study...And when I started teaching I realised: 'Wow! I'm in the right place'.

More than her own primary schooling, and more than her training, it was her experiences as a mother that enlightened her to some of the problems of the authoritarian teaching mode that was practised under apartheid.

I have a son who is a bit of a rebel, wild, and I remember teachers not understanding him. He was at a boys' school. And the teachers were so militant! He hated the subject English, or any language. They got an English teacher. All of a sudden this son of mine started loving Shakespeare. And I asked him why, and he said there was something about this woman, she gives you freedom of expression, and you could say your say while the other would be cross with you. And this teacher really did something in my son's life...I saw in this woman something typical of what teaching should be. You really should get from that child all you can.

She felt that the post-apartheid changes to education made it easier to work in this mode.

The first lesson was an example of Outcomes-based education, based on a prescribed set of 'critical outcomes' and science 'subject outcomes' from Curriculum 2005, and evaluated with a checklist of outcomes reached. It was part of a project on plants of the children's choice. There were 30 children in the class, seated in loose clusters. Ilse spoke mainly in English for my benefit, occasionally translating. She greeted the class and introduced me; she then

handed out envelopes to each group. Several pupils asked questions such as “Are all the envelopes the same?” She instructed the groups to open the envelopes, which contained several information sheets and an instruction sheet. She read aloud the instructions, which were for the children to extract certain types of information on plants from the sheets. A boy fiddling with a pen had it confiscated, and several children asked for clarification of issues such as “Which book do we write in?” After a couple of minutes of this, she said: “Now I want to see you all reading”. The groups distributed the contents of the envelopes, some settled down to reading individually, while others conversed with other group members, at times arguing over the sheets. Several children approached Ilse with questions about what they could and should do. She showed an example to the class of what one child was doing in order to clarify some points. Over the next 20 minutes, she continued to answer constant queries, go to groups and individuals to help or intervene, taking note of positive and negative behaviours and announcing common points to the whole group. A parent helper came in to collect money for juice; Ilse dealt with this administrative task, with pupils coming forward with money. Five minutes from the end of class, Ilse said, “Listen! You must put away those folders now. We will continue on Monday, when you will be getting further information from the library”. The children complied to varying degrees, with all the folders eventually returned and the room cleared for the next group’s arrival.

After the lesson, Ilse said that this lesson was not necessarily typical - it was in fact the first time that she had attempted this project with them, and there was pressure to retain other types of lesson and modes of assessment as well.

...this lesson goes on for four weeks. In the meantime, I do the normal little pieces of lesson, and at the end of the term they will write a test...I'll take a little bit, and they have to write that down and fill in the answers, do a little exercise. In these four weeks' time, they can go to the library, and do their own research, and come back...but the school board decided that we must have some tests as well (as the oral and continuous assessment).

She felt that generally the lesson had gone well, with some reservations. Her perspectives on children's capacities to cope with research-based learning revealed occasional shifts and ambiguities.

...as I said, I've never done it before. I think the aims were met because I can see they have a general idea. The enthusiasm. That's the main thing. But what worries me a bit is that they still cannot take that information and get out of that information what they want. It is a pitiful lack in these children, because they were taught that 'this you do, that you don't do'. But if you give them something and say 'carry on', you know they still like to be spoon-fed too much. ...I think they understand now how to get the information. This is the main aim...There is such an explosion of information in the world. For them to go and pick and choose information, that is one of the critical outcomes...the other worrying thing that bothers me in our teaching and that is the discipline. On the one hand one can really keep them calm, but that bothers me a bit. You don't want this buzzing and talking but that is one thing that you have to sacrifice, I think.

This was wonderful. But that was just the beginning. I wish you could now watch them until the end of the term...But the most important thing is that they must first try to select and read and really investigate. They're fantastic.

In discussing how the lesson differed from the pre-OBE approaches, she helpfully produced the old handbook.

I can talk but I'd like to show you. This is our handbook from the past. This is what the government expected from us that the children had to know. And we were not allowed to move much away...You see, there's the sunflower. We had to give them that information. There wasn't time for anything more...And the child couldn't cope with anything more, which I disagree with completely! They have to look at the sunflower, and say what's the colour of the stem, how do the roots look like, that's it...The big thing is examination time, you burden them with all these facts to remember by heart and then you're going to teach about this one is a poisonous plant, and then this bit, and that bit...¹

¹ Coincidentally, Cindy taught the same lesson the following week, using the old guidelines!

But she hadn't entirely abandoned the factual basis of learning.

I'm still giving them that factual - they still have to write tests but exams are worth maybe 20%, but this experiment would be 80%. So we're sizing it down a bit, the testing of these little facts.

Similarly, it proved a challenge to balance the individual and group work to meet the needs of children while fulfilling the prescribed outcomes of the new curriculum.

At first we forced them into groups. *This* is not a group task. Sometimes they really have to work together. They will not like it if we really have a group task for them. They are then forced to work together, there is no getting out of it, because that is also an outcome they must achieve. So what I will do, for this I will leave them; they can just do their own thing. Last year we had a situation where there was a boy who was eccentric. He wouldn't work with anybody. And eventually we decided to move him out of the group; he was really fighting with everyone. And that was a bit of a difficult situation. You do find children who would not budge and one must think of ideas...if you leave him for a while, later on he would sometimes join the group.

Other individualistic tendencies were also difficult to reconcile with the new approaches:

Competitiveness I think is born into each child. They don't want competitiveness in this new system. But I don't think you'll get rid of it though. It's a fine way of getting a child to work, to compete...I think they're making a big mistake, because we had this prize for the top ten students. Now we can't do that, because outcomes-based means that you don't compete against each other, you compete with yourself.

She felt that relationships with children were much improved, now that she was able to be more open and creative with them, and inspire their natural curiosity.

She reiterated that she had always known that there was "something wrong", that "we were in boxes; they were in cages". Under apartheid, she had had no choice but to conform: "There were many rules: what to do, what not to do".

She had "seen the light" when she started reading the works of a South African academic, who was able to articulate the feelings that she had always

suppressed. She also found that ideas emerging from the corporate world were inspiring, and ahead of the thinking in education.

When I read that manuscript, something opened up for me. There were so many things that I agreed with. It was more of a philosophical outlook on this whole thing. No method involved, just the philosophy of outcomes-base. Why we do what we do. What is a child? The abilities that children have, that in the past were just suppressed.

...this is where the whole outcomes-based thing really started. About the learning organisation...the people in the corporate business knew what was going on. My husband, he's a director of a meat processing company - the corporate world started changing this country. I went to a seminar with him; various people spoke about this changing society, and how South Africa should start turning into a learning organisation. Start creating skilled people...My husband said to me: 'It's going to happen in the schools; it must'.

She was thoroughly cynical about the reasons why education had lagged behind.

...I'm telling you the state was the cause of the bad school system in this country. Because they controlled everything. And they really thought that if they could brainwash these little ones, they would be all right. And they did a very good job, let me tell you.

She was concerned though, that the ANC might not be much better, and was very much on her guard against state control under a new guise. All interests, not just those of the poor black constituency, needed protection, and teachers could act as gatekeepers to control the effect of political interests.

I'm a bit scared about the ANC government, that they're going to start dictating to us. So one must be careful that you do not fall into the same trap. You must have an absolute enquiring mind to this. You mustn't just go into it and follow all the instructions...I think we are all a bit wary. The government is now again trying to put these ideas in a subtle manner in our heads. So you must always have that ability - I think that's the big thing - to distinguish between I'm leaving this out, I know this is politics...On the whole it is a wonderful system but I feel a bit worried that there is a bit of politics involved. Again. It is very much so that they want the poor communities to be dragged up, but I'm scared that they're trying to get the wealthy communities dragged down...I watch and I listen and I read all the articles about Bengku's publications

on this matter, and it's not that I don't trust him but I watch over him...There's no way that the government is going to use the school system for political purposes again in my life.

I do not trust politics and I find nothing moral about it...I don't believe in politics but I believe in human beings. The human factor in this country will make it work, not the politicians.

While the new approaches suited her, and she was sufficiently motivated and financially well-off not to be overly concerned about the material rewards of teaching, but it was not so easy for others.

I believe in what I'm doing, for the first time in my life...But I've heard many teachers tell me: 'Oh, heck no, I can't start this new thing. Do everything differently'. It's hard for them. They don't pay you. We get terrible salaries, and it's hard work...So it's a commitment rather than a job...If you do it for the money or for a job, you won't carry this thing through. I teach because I love it. That's the only reason.

She also expressed disappointment that teachers were not always mutually supportive, and rarely learned from each other. "Teachers don't tend to share. That is just so sad. I wanted to share, but it was years of struggling all by myself...everything I've learned was from trial and error". She was sure that while other teachers felt affectionate towards her, she would also be seen as "eccentric" and "unconventional".

She had had some specialist training in preparation for piloting OBE, and it seemed to be quite unlike some of the other, more superficial, INSET strategies that other teachers discussed.

First breaking down your paradigm...you know, the old way of thinking. It's easy to get stuck inside this way of thinking and you don't want to challenge it. I understood exactly what they meant...They gave us some problems, and we had to solve the problem. And it was like problems that, you know, you would think, oh it's so easy, and then you would say 'no, it doesn't belong to the new democratic world'.

Later in the afternoon of the second day, Ilse taught an English lesson using new materials. The story was about a black boy who moved to a new mixed-race school, and felt he didn't fit in. The final line of the story made the moral clear: "Being different doesn't have to make a difference. It's really getting to know someone that counts". We discussed how she tried to incorporate a moral lesson into her teaching, tailoring it to specific needs of children in the class.

You know I copied this thing before you came because there was a little black girl in this class. Ivy came from a rural school, and they are so lazy those teachers, she was taught nothing and we had to put her back to grade three...I wanted them to realise that we had a different girl, and I copied that thing especially to break the ice.

"That racial thing" was awkward - none of the classes she taught had more than two black children in them. She personally had a strong identification with Afrikaner ethnicity and culture, and felt that they were much misunderstood. She was proud of how, in her reading of history, they had pulled themselves up out of poverty, suggesting that blacks should do the same.

...the black people want to get rich. They are now where we were 45 years ago...We were poor. Impoverished. The victims of the war, the Boer war, we were impoverished. We really were forced, women from the concentration camps, forced out of the cities into the poorer residential areas. We were the underclass then. We were like the blacks are now. We had to get up again, we were all on our knees, and start. And unfortunately I have to say that the English did that. Most Afrikaner children have gone to university; we valued education. That is the way forward.

She felt that her own values reflected a Christian ethic which was part of her:

"You can't say this is my religious beliefs and this is my life. It is part of your whole being". She considered herself "a bit of a philanthropist", and felt that her work reflected this. She could imagine living "in one of those black states,

and farm and live in a shack, and teach the little black children". The affluence of the children at Pieter Von Wet - unlike those in her philanthropic dream - made them apathetic at times: "I get so cross when children have these beautiful books and opportunities and they are so uninterested".

The parent community, as mentioned before, was very conservative. However, Ilse believed that eventually even they would come around to the new approaches.

Parents are very upset and worried. As a matter of fact, there was a meeting the other week and they were very upset. They think the standards are going to fall, children won't get into university, how are they going to study anymore? Some even call it a communist thing; they think we are trying to put all the children on one level...I can understand these fears. Here something new is happening, this OBE; they don't know it. If I weren't teaching, I would be really worried. But here children aren't failing; they're moving on, and children don't have to write tests anymore, they're not competing.

Ilse was extremely surprised - shocked, perhaps - when I told her that in England there was a move towards greater competition (especially between schools), and more testing and control over curriculum and pedagogy.

We finished by discussing my interpretations of what I had seen and we had discussed. She agreed that her role was that of a reflective mediator between, on the one hand, the new curriculum and the forces behind it, and on the other, her pupils and their parents. She agreed wholeheartedly when I suggested that she was "someone that really has a kind of feeling about things rather than what someone has told you or what you've learned on an academic level. When something new appeals to you, it's not that you're suddenly introduced to something brand new, it's that somebody articulates it in an academic way".

In these ways, along with the importance she placed on her relationships with children, we agreed that it was the personal dimension of her job that she gave most significance. She had had to reject the values she grew up with in the process of becoming the teacher she was, but she said that it was worth it because “so many lives were wasted”.

* * * *

Ilse was an example of an experienced teacher who had been aware on some level, long before the reforms, that there were serious problems with the non-democratic modes of education practised under apartheid. When presented with the possibility of change, she embraced it. However, her new mode of teaching was not unproblematic. She faced competing imperatives between the *demands of parents, and the needs she perceived in children*. Within herself, there were unresolved dilemmas in terms of these needs - do children need competition? Are they really able to cope with independent learning? - which were sometimes expressed in contradictions in the interviews. In her practice, the difficulties of meeting the needs of all the pupils individually *and* collectively while managing the classroom to a degree of order with which she could cope meant that pupils often competed for her attention. She also ended up playing the role of the ‘intervening non-interventionist’ (Alexander 1995) - children’s confusion, desires for attention, and lack of independence forcing her to lead more strongly than she really wanted. Thus she was experiencing the *teacher as authoritarian versus teacher as facilitator*, and *teacher control versus pupil freedom* dilemmas, along with juggling *knowledge transmission versus collaborative learning*, and *children’s extrinsic versus intrinsic motivations*. In

dealing with these competing imperatives, she pitted her own judgements against those of parents, and tried to find a middle ground.

She had reflected extensively on the interface of politics and education: this had left her quite cynical about politics, and created an immensely demanding role as she attempted to mediate between the political world and the classroom. She took this role seriously and personally; in fact, like many of the teachers, it was this personal *feel* for teaching and children that motivated her. She had had exceptional exposure to ideas from outside education, which had helped to reinforce (rather than shape) her views. But the main cohesive device of her apartheid and post-apartheid life story was her conviction that she had always known that apartheid education was wrong – therefore, in a sense, the reforms had to catch up with her, rather than the other way around.

Like the other South African teachers, she identified extremely strongly with her own ethnic group; in her case Afrikaners, whom she believed were misunderstood. While she was vociferously against racism, she clearly held opinions about members of other races which had not been fully deconstructed at the end of apartheid.

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Mary

Mary's school was in a township in the largely-rural Mpumalanga province, in the north-eastern part of South Africa. The township had been a sight of considerable protest and unrest during apartheid. The area surrounding the school consisted of small permanent dwellings and a nearby shantytown. There was a lot of construction going on at the time of the case study, as latrines and

piped water were being supplied to the area for the first time, as part of the ANC's programme of housing. In the typical pattern of South African townships, it was located on poor land near a town which was formerly whites-only. The housing was generally of developing-world standard, crowded into small spaces, many homes constructed at least partly out of corrugated zinc. Many people were on the unpaved streets as we pulled up to the school, some arriving in school uniform, others on the move on foot or in public transport vans, many others 'hanging around' by the small shops and kiosks.

The school itself was housed within what was originally a community centre. While of very basic construction, it was well-kept, and small extras like flowers along the paths indicated an extra level of pride and care. The school had served the community for ten years, starting as a 'platoon' school (the second shift at another school). The headteacher, indicated that there were just over 1000 pupils, most of whom were from very poor families, many of the parents unemployed. There was a waiting list for pupils wanting to enter the school. The school had experienced a number of interventions, and was something of a model school for the township. Teachers had had some in-service training, including some through a DFID project in the area. However, the school suffered from a teacher shortage, with the head consequentially having to teach 50 periods per week. There were three black female teachers who joined us; all were happy to act as case studies. I decided to work with Mary and visit the others during lessons over the next two days, since Mary specialised in English; I felt that interviews and observations would be made easier for us, and that she would be the most comfortable of them in communicating in English (although it was a second language). Mary taught grades four to seven.

Mary had grown up in the Cape area, and had her primary schooling there. Her memories of her early years reflect the difficult conditions found in black schools at the time, although she accepted these conditions as normal.

We were so many in a classroom...about 70 to 80 in a class. And pupils were not given books. Their parents had to buy their books, and we didn't even have textbooks, only the teacher had the one textbook. So we had to write everything from the board, and we were always writing, writing, from the morning until the afternoon. There was no discussion, we had no laboratories for experiments, and we had no books like now. These pupils have a big library. No library. It was so difficult. But we didn't see it. Because we thought that is was the way it should be.

Yeah, they (teachers) were strict because there was no other way, we were so many. We were too many...they would not know what the others were doing, just go and play at the back of the class. They would concentrate on the few...It was really difficult for them, I must tell you.

She was one of those who stood out: "I was a very talkative person - I was a child who didn't like to sit at the back".

By the end of primary school, she realised that she wanted to explore other regions.

...when I reached grade six or grade seven, I realised that I didn't want to be there. I had a mother who was very understanding. So I told my mother - she liked us to be independent - and then she sent me to Siskai, to a boarding school.

At that time, Siskai was one of the 'independent homelands'. She also did her teacher training there, motivated by her feelings for children. However, she did not have many choices open to her at that time, because of the regulations of apartheid.

I like children. I think that when a child is uneducated - I dream of children. And I dream of a child who is suffering, and how to help him. And I also dream of a child who doesn't understand, how can I make him understand?

I became a teacher instead of getting an education. Isn't it so that during apartheid black teachers were only allowed to go to standard eight and then to a two year teachers' course. After a few years they changed this, but then we were allowed only to do up to standard 10 and then secondary education. So the ones who didn't do secondary education were supposed to do correspondence. So that is what I did.

Mary had been a teacher since 1980, with brief interruptions when her two children were babies. Her first job reflected the wanderlust suggested by her early decision to leave the Cape.

I went to Namibia to work. I knew no-one; I just went there. Yeah, I didn't like to stay in one place...I was teaching in a mine school. That place was so beautiful.

She then added with a laugh and a knowing look: "And then I got married".

One of the first lessons was a double period (80 minutes) in English language for a fifth grade class, focusing on reading comprehension and grammar. In response to her greeting, the 41 children, who were seated in eight clusters, stood up and chanted: "Good morning, teacher". Mary began the lesson by reviewing the grammar lesson from the previous week, asking for volunteers to answer the questions: "What is a noun?" "What is a verb?" Children with their hands up were called on to answer, and then the whole class repeated the response in chorus. Mary then read aloud a brief story about owls from the textbook while the children listened. She occasionally translated difficult sections into Zulu. The same text was then read aloud by individual children. Mary then paraphrased the story, pausing to allow the pupils to fill in words in chorus. The story finished, the children were instructed (first in English, then in Zulu) to work in groups to complete a chart, extracting nouns, verbs and adjectives from the text. The pupils worked on the task, some groups more collaboratively than others, while she went to different groups to help. After 15

minutes, Mary sent away an audience of children that was gathering at the windows. She asked the pupils: "Did we find any verbs/nouns/adjectives?", and the pupils replied "Yes" in chorus. The pupils continued working in groups for another 15 minutes, with Mary helping groups and individuals. When groups who were finished started to drift off-task, she asked for examples of each category for the whole class to hear. When one group suggested 'happy' as an adjective, she corrected them, stating that since it was a feeling, it was a noun. She finally assured the class that "You are all doing good - marvellous" and dismissed them to their next lesson.

I asked Mary how she would have taught the same lesson 10 years ago, and what materials she would have used.

I would have the textbook in front of me, doing the old methods, picking out all the verbs that I know and putting them down, doing drill work, and they just have to learn it. Not discovery learning. I discovered today what they know. I say, go to your mother. Just tell your mother: 'Sit. Stand Mom'. And what you are doing, you are doing a verb.

...right now I will let them read magazines, to let them cut out and underline verbs. It can be a lesson for a month. And it becomes much easier when giving them a composition. Give them a composition and tell them, "Okay, write the first paragraph in the past tense. All the verbs must be in the past tense". And then they underline them, and they know they are writing everything in the past tense.

She felt that she had choices in what and how she had changed her classroom practice: "I wanted to change. There's so much I want to teach, and so many methods in my mind". She also felt that change had been constant, not just a one-off major response to national political transitions, and that she still had much to learn.

You know, the more you teach, the more things change. You can't say that you are an old teacher and you know a lot. You become a new

teacher every day, because children do new things every day. You learn new things every day and apply them...I've never told myself now I know enough, or have enough methods or enough equipment, or I can't change, or the ones fresh from college, there is nothing I can take from her...maybe at school, the things that I do in the class - you think it is the right way, but you don't know.

The situation in the community made her job more difficult. She was open about the problems that many of the children experienced at home, and the negative impact that this had on their education, along with the aftermath of the unrest of the apartheid years. However, there was a feeling that things were slowly improving.

...a lot of parents here don't have time and they are out of work. Some of the children come and we find the mother can't write...Sometimes we have a parent come in shouting: 'I send my children to school to educate them, and now you tell me that I must do this'...we've got to explain to them, even if you can't help the child with writing, encourage him...Some children don't go to secondary school, because they can't buy a uniform...Some of the parents, they don't know: they just treat the child as an object to be hit, something to be scolded...you know some of the children don't even have a lunchbox...some others come to school hungry.

...after these changes, to go back to normal is very difficult. Especially when there are fights...to go back to normal is so difficult. The children are going around the streets, then they have got to come back to school, and it becomes difficult to collect them.

...now they are building the sewers, and they are improving the site of the shantytown. Now at least everyone will have a toilet in the area. Even the water - they had no taps, one site for all the houses one tap. Now each and every house has got a tap...They are satisfied, because most of the people who stay around the school, they are from farms; a white man was their leader and they were working under this man, and now they are independent, with their own toilet and water, and they can look for work in town.

Things had also improved for teachers (at least for black teachers like herself), in terms of class sizes and material conditions. Even so, she often had to contribute resources herself.

I'm sure that in the past teachers were very stressed-out. There was a lot of stress...It has improved, especially inside the schools. The classes, the numbers, at least we can work with the numbers. Now at least there are 40 or 45, we can handle them. And the salary schemes have changed...now there are subsidies, at least we can afford a two-bedroom house.

Most of the textbooks are not enough, and the teaching aids and the learning material. If I've got to choose a lesson I know that I will have to buy some things in order for the lesson to be successful.

The sense that she was better off than most made Mary a very charitable person. She brought her children's old clothes to school to give to poorer children she knew, she gave money regularly to families who were struggling, and she tried to generate domestic work for unemployed neighbours. She felt that it was a weakness of hers that the poverty and need of people around her affected her "too personally", upsetting her and giving her "sleepless nights": "I feel like if I had a bigger house, would have accommodated all of them. It's impossible". This desire to give was also a manifestation of the very strong religious feeling which was a powerful force in her life.

I started being like this at a very early age, but this became serious when I became a Christian. My church taught me to give. And once you look at the needs of the child - you must give to the needy, to those who don't have, share out clothes and other things.

She had been a born-again Christian for five years, and subscribed to an evangelical faith.

I am spiritually gifted. Most people don't believe in such things...I see visions...I've got a healing power, all those things. When I am at church I automatically use these powers...I just think that everything that is said in the Bible, we've got to bring it into practice.

Her feelings and values about children and teaching generally seemed bound up in her sense of charity. She ascribed great significance to the inter-personal

relationships between teacher and pupil, as the source of many possibilities for the child, and satisfaction for the teacher.

(Teaching) takes self-discipline, dedication, lots of effort, love...Tell yourself you are a teacher, a facilitator, you didn't come for anything else. The most important thing in the end is the thing between you and the child. When you look at a child, you want that child to be successful. You want this child to have a better future because of you. You are everything to this child. You are the mother, you are the father, you are a parent. And even a facilitator. So the success of this child is in your hands. You will become so happy when you see a child that can continue.

She recognised that not all teachers offered this level of commitment, and that as a profession they were not sufficiently appreciated by the community.

...some regard teaching as a minor profession. That we just keep the kids, and they just feel that teachers are not working hard. Others dismiss themselves here from 8:00 until 2:00, and that's not enough.

While she was friendly with her fellow teachers, she admitted that most of them who taught different grades worked fairly isolated from each other, intensifying again the nature of relationships with the children.

Teachers, when you work together, they don't see me as someone that they really know, because we are in different classes....I don't know, just as a colleague.

Despite an awareness of how politics affected people's personal lives, she associated it mainly with unrest and disruption to work, and was fairly disdainful of it.

We never thought of the changes. There were so many changes, you see. Where I was brought up, it was not a highly political area. Even the teachers who were teaching at that time, they were very much hard working. This is the way we should live...I care little for politics. If feel that if change should come, it should be there, come peacefully...they should not be through fights...no guns, shooting.

When asked which values were important for children to be taught, she said: “I don’t want to choose political...Socialise with people; have a conscience”.

In terms of influences on her current practice, Mary felt that her initial teacher training had proved very useful, and that the things she had learned continued to have a positive effect: “...up to now I apply them, even if there are changes of method”. She had also had a week’s in-service training in which she learned about “discovery methods”, which she enjoyed; she had found that the pupil response to “being their own masters” and “finding out for themselves” has been very good. All teachers who attended such courses were meant to pass on their new understanding to colleagues, but the structures and opportunities for sharing what had been learned were limited.

Unlike the other South African teachers, Mary only raised the issue of race when asked directly about it. Her answer reflected some interesting conceptions of the similarities and differences between races, and a stress on the importance of individuality within them.

I’m proud to be a black woman...If you are a black, it’s almost like you are a white. It’s a colour. And I think it depends on the individual...when you are an individual, you can’t devote yourself to only one thing. One thing that I like of the whites is that they don’t concentrate on only one thing. Like a white woman can be a teacher and a businesswoman at the same time. You can go and teach in the morning, and then work in a shop in the evening. You can be creative in any way you want to be...I mostly like to be creative, and I don’t like to be stereotyped.

She also had views on gender differences, and their place in teaching, with men normally being associated with authoritarian and disciplinarian roles: a role they should learn to adapt.

Even a man can go and teach...it depends on how much love they have for those kids. It's also his job. They need care and love. But I think a man can be as a father to these kids...Women are much softer to kids...Even at the pre-schools there should be men also. Children shouldn't look upon men as someone striking them, someone always playing the big role of boss in the house you know.

At the end of the second day, Mary was eager to discuss what had been learned through the interviews and observations. I expressed the belief that she was interested in social issues, and in her own professional growth; however, what was most important to her was the relationships that she had with the children, and she took her responsibilities very personally and very much to heart, in line with her religious beliefs. "Exactly", she noted. She said that she had thought about some of the issues raised before, especially "...those that are based on the child specifically; those that are based on the child and his background". She also agreed that she had probably modified some of the newer approaches for use in her classroom, taking into consideration her own capacities, those of the children, and the limited resources she had to hand. In the end she felt that the experience had been a challenge: "I learned a lot - about myself - things I wasn't aware".

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Mary's case exemplified some of the problematics of introducing new methodology in a situation where a lifetime of educational deprivation and poor role models compete with a week's INSET intervention. While she was able to explain how she had significantly modified her classroom practice in accordance with the new guidelines, and she was eager to introduce more democratic and 'discovery' learning (her term), the nature of what was being taught, and the

way that grouping was used suggested that the changes were at the surface. While from her perspective, her pedagogy was discovery learning, from another perspective the traditional elements would be more obvious - raising questions about who should define 'child-centred' pedagogy, and how, and the relativity of the nature of changes to practice. She was thus experiencing the *teacher as authoritarian versus teacher as facilitator*, and *knowledge transmission versus collaborative learning* approaches to pedagogy. Her own subject knowledge was also a complicating problem. The improvements in material conditions and class sizes were obviously of considerable importance, and in themselves had brought opportunities to try new approaches; somehow the rest was supposed to come from within her.

Her religious devotion and its influence on her life and work was singular in this study, and was the foundation that sustained her through the demands of change. While unique in its strength, its manifestation as a desire to help children and a devotion to loving, nurturing one-to-one relationships had resonance with the motivations expressed by other teachers. She saw these relationships as very powerful forces in the lives of children. The political process - which she associated with conflict and disruption - was accorded a considerably less positive influence; she had not found a way of reconciling *the need for political education with her suspicion about the nature of politics*. Like many other teachers, she sometimes found herself at odds with the parent community, who did not respect the role she felt she had in the lives of her pupils, and who undervalued the commitment and responsibility of teachers generally. Generally, she sought autonomy, and this was manifested in the

dilemmas teacher as independent versus teacher as part of a team, and teacher's judgements versus external pressures.

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Natasha

The school where Natasha was teaching in the frosty Urals spring of 1998 was situated in the industrial suburbs of Perm. As an 'ordinary school', it served the community in the area, with many of the parents having jobs in the nearby factories, or unemployed former workers of the struggling industries. It incorporated all grades of the nine years of compulsory education, and had a smaller, somewhat selective intake of students for the final two years of secondary schooling. The building was undergoing badly-needed repair, as the director pointed out, but funds were not forthcoming and the building, while ostensibly safe, had large cracks in the walls and 'potholes' in the floors; the roof leaked badly in places and the facilities were generally in poor condition. The school had been established in 1957, and had nearly 1500 students - large by Russian standards. The students came to school in three shifts in order to accommodate the large numbers.

Natasha had volunteered to act as a case study teacher when I had participated in an in-service course seminar at the pedagogical university. Natasha was a teacher of a 'corrective'² stream class in grade 4. Children judged to be of lower ability, or to have mild special needs because of learning difficulties, were segregated from other pupils to receive special measures for the first four years of school, with the view to re-introducing them to the mainstream in the

² All the interpreters, and the English-speaking respondents, used this term, which is a translation of the Russian word.

intermediate grades if they were able. This was a post-communist innovation which had been introduced into most of the schools I visited - here, exceptionally, the special classes continued through the middle years of schooling. The curriculum was generally very similar to mainstream classes, but slightly watered down, and class sizes were smaller.

Natasha had grown up in Perm, the daughter of two geologists. Natasha had been a student at School 54 for three years as a child; in fact, 18 of the teachers on the staff were graduates of the school. Natasha had very good memories of the school, and this had been a motivating factor in her decision to teach there. She remembered very little of her first couple of years of primary school, but she remembered her first teacher when she arrived at School 54, who was a notable inspiration even at the age of 10, and who remained an influence.

I recall that I liked my first teacher here very much....She works at the school still, and we sometimes work together in the primary school. So, when I became a student teacher, I had my teaching practice here, especially with this very teacher. And so I tried to learn her lessons, attend the lessons and observe them...She is kind. She could always understand. And one of the main things I remember from my childhood, my parents told me that I imitated her gestures.

She described the major changes between then and the present.

The methods have changed, and there are a great number of new subjects in the curriculum...For example, we never dreamed of children in primary school learning about English and economics. And the corrective classes; we have the so-called corrective hours and developmental hours, where we can help the children...There are a great number of new programmes and new textbooks, so a teacher can just choose a textbook by herself. And of course there is a requirement, but the way that we choose to teach, and what, is the choice of the teacher.

She admitted that it was difficult to describe how exactly she made these choices, but the director at this point commented: "If the programme suits your temperament, your personality, the features of your character, then it is nice to

take that programme". Natasha tempered the so-far glowing description by noting that: "The financial situation at school is worse...That's why we have so many problems". She also expressed the opinion that the teacher's task had become more of a challenge in the process:

It's more difficult. One needs to have a great deal of knowledge...Everything is changing very rapidly. If you don't watch the changes, and if you don't develop yourself, it is very easy to lag behind. The whole education process is looking for something rational, trying to find something.

She worked hard keeping herself informed about innovations, reading a number of teachers' journals and newspapers, and belonging to discussion groups "for discussing different problems of methods". She had also attended the in-service course on the teaching of children with learning difficulties at the pedagogical university, and on completing it after a year, had given lectures to other teachers at the school.

The first lesson was a natural science lesson on deserts, for the 21 pupils in her class. Natasha started the lesson by asking for a volunteer to "Please show a place on the map without forests". One boy came forward and pointed, followed by another (whose pointer had to be guided by Natasha), and then Natasha asked "Who is the bravest of the girls?", soliciting a female volunteer to perform the same task. The other pupils watched, and when prompted, applauded the volunteers' efforts. Attention was then turned to a list of desert plants on the board; the list was read by volunteers, and there was a short exchange of questions from the teacher and answers from the pupils about the plants. The pupils were very eager to answer, raising and waving their hands enthusiastically in the typical Russian elbow-on-the-desk, palm-splayed

manner. The children were then instructed to open and date their exercise books, and to write short answers to questions about the climate and plants of the desert. The answers were found in a textbook, from which selected pupils read relevant sections aloud. While they read, Natasha used hand gestures to reinforce the points being made, gestures which the children were encouraged to imitate. She also showed pictures of deserts. The pupils generally acted together, except when one was called on to answer or read. One restless boy, while very keen to answer questions, was distracted, restless in his chair, and kept whispering swear words in English to the interpreter. Natasha ignored him until a point when the other children were writing, when she put her arm around him and whispered to him. When the questions were all answered, Natasha asked, "So what have we learned today?" and reviewed the content of the lesson through a final question-and-answer session. She asked the children to "Please close everything and put it to the side of the desk. Take a piece of paper and try to draw the desert, in any colour that you like". One boy drew on the board while the others drew their own pictures; Natasha showed the class a few of the drawings from those who were "brave enough", and exhibited and praised several of them. The bell signalled the end of the lesson, and the children immediately put their books in their desks.

It was clearly a lesson for the learning of facts, although it wasn't put quite in that way: "The aim was to acquaint them with the desert, with its climate and different natural circumstances, to show weather in winter and in summer, to explain different kinds of deserts". She noted that such content-based lessons were not easy for the children, but that the alternatives were not better, at least not for these pupils.

The material is quite difficult, so 80% of the children won't be able to remember all of the material. And when they go to the fifth form, maybe they will remember tomorrow, but not then, as it is complicated and difficult. Of course we have classes for development³ in education; their lessons may be devoted just to discussion, they can just think during the lesson, discuss some points, but with these children it is impossible just to discuss something and it is necessary not to change the structure of the lesson, as if something changes they will be out of the activity.

We discussed at length particular children in the class - she had obviously considered carefully the diagnosis of each child's weaknesses and strengths, and how best to cope with them. She was sympathetic to Sacha, the boy who had tried to attract so much attention in the lesson. Her analysis of Sacha showed clear impressions of his needs and weaknesses, and her diagnosis and solutions had been a matter of trial and error.

He gets tired very quickly, and it is necessary to come up to him and help. It is necessary to praise him if he does good work, to tell him that he will know many interesting things...He has disorders in the emotional sphere. His mental processes are quite brilliant; he thinks in quite a good way. It is necessary to praise him, and say that he is a very good boy and a very nice pupil. But it is necessary to do that individually and not in front of the class, because when he is praised in front of the class he stands up and says 'I am a good boy!' He will express his emotions in a very enthusiastic way...Sometimes he has explosions of emotions and it's difficult to handle him. And in such cases I just take him by the hand and go to the corridor. There he sits for a couple of minutes and tries to calm down...He is from a very poor family; the family doesn't care for him. His father is very cruel with him.

It's just from experience. Once I praised him, then once more...it is impossible to find a regular recipe for every child.

She was aware of the differing individual needs of children even when the system did not encourage it and did not cater for such idiosyncracies.

³ Such classes were other streams which used the methodology developed by developmental psychologists to offer an enriched programme to select students. Ludmilla taught such a group in another school.

...when I started working, there was the system of raising hands and sitting very quietly, and as it was the normal thing they just couldn't do that, and I was really horrified. Especially as we always had different tests, and senior teachers come to our lessons, and observe them. So I was really very embarrassed and didn't know what to do, because they just couldn't follow the system.

She explained how this lesson would have been different before the reforms.

When I started working we had requirements, special books, and it was mainly just reading, writing, reading, writing, and that was all. But now teachers have changed. For example, lots of games are in the lesson, and lots of visual aids. So really the whole attitude had changed; there are more actions in class, more activity for the children. There are no more strict requirements for the children to sit in this or that way, and to raise their hands as if they were soldiers....now, they can sit any way they like, but the main thing is that they can perceive the information, the material.

It was her belief that many teachers, especially older ones, found these adjustments very difficult. She also felt that even for the more radical teachers, many of the traditional methods prevailed, supplemented by new approaches.

The school generally is a very conservative institution; that's why all the changes do not usually take place very easily here. There are a great number of teachers who have a long length of service and that's why it's difficult for them to perceive the changes, and change their attitudes and perceptions....For example, there was a teacher, she has worked at this school for a long time...For her, it is quite unnatural to see such lessons, she still thinks the children are to sit strictly and quietly. She thinks that the teacher should operate the children as if they were chess figures....Still, verbal methods of presenting the information are the majority for us.

She had learned many new methods from the in-service course, which she had "transplanted" into her teaching, and she was attempting to influence others in the school.

All the games are taken from that course. And also drawing at the lesson was also presented to us during the course. We had the programme of Frau Schmidt (a German tutor who had taught on the course), and I had a talk with the director in order to have a room for lessons where we do not hear the bells that ring at the school...I'm the only teacher in this school who has attended this course, and some of the

teachers have never heard of anything like that...some of them will pretend as if there is no such problem at all....Some teachers younger than me see me as a senior teacher, come to my lessons and ask for advice.

She felt that for her, working with lower-stream children and accepting and addressing each individual child's needs was part of her philosophy and a natural fit with her personality.

The main problem of the teacher is that they should accept the child patiently; children are not to blame for their behaviour...Teachers usually complain of such children...I am a calm and quiet person by nature, so it is quite easy for me to work with such children...sometimes I think I am too kind. It is necessary sometimes to press on a child, but sometimes I can't...Maybe it is some kind of ability, but I can see the problem of a child, and know whether I can help them or not...a teacher has an individual personality, and that's why sometimes different teachers can take this method or that.

Despite her general enthusiasm for the new freedoms, in her opinion, not all the changes and innovations in schooling had been positive. Much had been lost in the social functions of school, and teachers' capacities were stretched to meet strange new demands.

There are some drawbacks. We forgot completely the past, but we do not have the present. For example we had the Pioneer organisation, and the *Octobrist* organisation, for small children. We had Pioneer ideals...now they are just to live on their own. After four lessons, they just go to the street and walk there, because parents are busy with their jobs, and we have no organisations like Pioneers and *Octobrists*...We had some ideals, some aims, to go for, somehow.

And it is difficult to teach children different things, for example from the Bible, and teachers just can't do that because they have no knowledge. It's not just the knowledge of teachers, but also their patience, their tolerance...

Many changes had happened on the surface, particularly in other schools, where a veneer of progress and elitism was a sham.

...there are schools in Perm which call themselves gymnasiums, lyceums, and they have specialist subjects. But everything is just the same; they are the same schools, so they do not justify the name change.

These challenges were exacerbated by what Natasha perceived to be unhelpful apathy on the part of parents.

It is not a secret that parents do not work with their children, talk to them. Children in this class are from such families. Many parents just tell their children, 'Why do you go to school? It's not necessary; you can just go to the market and sell some things'...they don't care at all, and the children get no help from them. I get no help from that.

She also found that working conditions linked to problems with resources and lack of specialised training to hinder progress as well.

Sometimes I really suffer through, and I hope that the director will help me; it is very difficult to work with such large numbers of children...Something else would be to have a separate building, with specialists to work with such children...There are a great number of textbooks and other literature from which we can choose, but sometimes we have no funds to buy them, because they are very expensive. Before, the school could afford to buy new visual aids and things like that; now it's necessary to do it all by yourself. We have very primitive aids...The supply of such things was centralised before the reforms, and the situation in that way was much better.

Despite these constraints she found her work very rewarding, and felt she would still be doing it in ten years' time.

I have done so many things; I have good experience in this field, so it's no use drifting to another place. It's interesting for me to work with such children. I feel happy when a child comes to the end of the developmental phase, and I have helped him achieve the normal level of development...I can't imagine doing another job.

As she had remarked earlier, she had wanted to be a teacher from a young age, acting the part from her primary school years. Her family had influenced her choice of career, although not directly.

My parents are both geologists; I remember they were against my choice. Because for many years, the job of teacher was somehow

underrated, and underpaid. But there is a kind of cult of education in my family...they always taught me that I had to learn, learn, learn all the time. They somehow gave me a spark to go into the teaching profession, and that's why I became a teacher myself.

Yet the status of teachers had, in her opinion, deteriorated further since those early warnings, contributing to the problems of the feminisation of the profession, difficulties in home-school relations, and the numbers of people leaving the profession.

In the history of Russian teaching there were very many male teachers before the revolution...the whole school now is full of female teachers. I think the problem can be solved if the job of teaching had higher prestige. It is also a problem of money.

Before, teachers were something like gods. And people listened to their advice, and asked teachers for help...Now school is something different, and home is something different...Now when I get acquainted with new people who I tell that I am a teacher at school, they almost seem to pity me...when I started at the pedagogical college, we all wanted to become teachers. Now of my friends from our group, I am the only one still working with children at school.

She had never had strong political feelings, neither during communist times nor since democratic reform. She did find even her casual affiliation with communist organisations somewhat embarrassing, however, but did not hesitate to explain to the pupils the historical background to those times, and saw that as a kind of political education. To her, apolitical communal values were still worth preserving, and teaching children to deal with their feelings was the best education for peace and democracy.

When I was growing up, that was just natural; we were all members of the *Komsomol* organisation...It was embarrassing. We had taught children to follow those ideals, and then it turned out to be a lie...It turned out we were told lies, and in turn we told lies to our children...we always used a lot of texts and a lot of materials about the fathers of the revolution, about Lenin, and now children see the pictures and the pages and they ask; that's why it's necessary to explain...Very often it's easy to hear from the children that they do not like their country, this it is a bad country, I don't want to stay here.

The topic about deserts - it said that in the south of our country there is a desert. Actually, it's not our country anymore! I just say that this is the south, and not mention anything else. So it is necessary for the teacher to be interested in politics in that way, at least in order to know their subject.

It is better to build a kind of monument for the children, and to work towards that ideal with my colleagues. It is better that it is based on such ideals. We should not be ready to fight, ready to kill each other...children should be brought up in communal ways somehow, a community. Sometimes in caring for children there is a great number of negative emotions, sometimes they are just in frustration, sometimes they are very aggressive. And if we want to change something for the better, we have to create more positive emotions.

We closed the sessions by discussing her strengths as a teacher: her personal patience and calmness, and her willingness to develop herself professionally. She reflected a great deal on what was best for the children individually and collectively, and tried to bring what she had learned as well as her own ideas to her practice, judging carefully what was appropriate before using or adapting it. She commented on the importance - but also the isolation - of working in this reflective mode.

Of course I have asked myself some of the questions. After the working day you come home and you start to think over your work, think about successes. You can have some problems: you can look for the answers in a book, or you can think it up all by yourself...Because the environment, the background is always changing, I cannot imagine my activities without analysing them.

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Natasha's case illustrated some of the commonalities among the Russian teachers in this study. Her practice had been modified in the light of reforms, mainly through the reflective introduction of specific tactics and approaches which were learned from a course or from independent study. Despite the introduction of such activities, and a general loosening of the expectations of teachers in terms of students' regimented behaviours, to the outsider it still

looked quite traditional, and very much in a whole-class teaching pattern, led strongly by the teacher. However, this was combined with understanding of the capacities and needs of individual pupils, and a conviction that this whole-class mode *was* addressing their individual needs. Sacha was not being ignored and then spoken to quietly and individually so the lesson would not be interrupted; it was considered the best approach for his personal development and learning. What might be perceived as a contradiction appears to thrive as a viable dynamic in this and other Russian classrooms.

Natasha also exemplified some of the continuities that have prevailed through changes. Such continuities are not surprising, with an ageing teaching force, and very little turnover - the fact that so many of this school's teachers had had their own schooling there was quite telling. The coverage of curriculum was still of paramount importance, and Natasha was aware that the pupils couldn't possibly absorb it all (*content cover versus deep learning*). The very existence of 'corrective' classes, and the hope of diagnosing and 'normalising' such children in order for them to join mainstream education, shows how many important values are still referenced normatively, despite the attention to the needs of individuals (*personal development of individual pupils versus common standards*). Her continuing admiration for the kindness and understanding one of her own teachers showed how the personality 'cult' of the teacher was not merely a recent, individualistic western fabrication. The importance of the teacher's character also shone through in her discussion of how methods and approaches were chosen, and this was a theme throughout virtually all of the case studies in both countries. While she apparently relied on her own talents considerably (*teaching as calling*) she also used what she had learned in professional

development courses (*teaching as a learned skill*); however, her “personality” governed the judgements about which learned techniques to “transplant”. In fact, this calm, confident personality, while belying some underlying tensions, survived the transition from communism to post-communism, and allowed her to question her habits openly without losing face.

In terms of political education, she seemed still to be smarting from the debunking of the communist values embedded in the old curriculum, and was looking for a balance between the need for political education and her own lack of conviction. She also expressed very clearly the dilemma of *ideologised curriculum versus no clear alternative*, and struggled with it.

* * * * *

Mikhail

The urban school where Mikhail was teaching was known as an ‘elite’ school, with a specialisation in English language. The students started to learn English from the age of six, and continued it throughout their primary and secondary schooling, which took place at the same school. The school catered for just over 1000 students, most of whom were from relatively wealthy backgrounds. While the direct costs of attending the school were the same as for a normal school, informal selection channels made it much more likely that students from affluent families would be accepted, not only on the basis of their academic ability, and they supported the school financially through donations. When I arrived at the school, children in designer clothes were being dropped off by adults in cars. The school facilities were well-maintained, and while certainly

not luxurious by western standards, they were of a somewhat higher standard than many of the normal schools were able to offer.

My original intention had been to visit the school simply to see what an 'elite' school was like. As an English teacher, Mikhail had been asked by the head to talk to me about the school, and answer my questions. His English was excellent, and he had some novel and vehemently-expressed opinions, so it seemed a very good opportunity to conduct another case study. While some of his teaching took place in the upper forms, many of his classes were from the pre-secondary phase as well.

Before we could start to approach his biographical background, Mikhail made clear from the outset that no matter what the demands of the reforms communicated by the officials, he had his own ideas about the objectives of his teaching, and the best means of attaining them.

...to me, the main idea is to *teach* them. I want them to know the English language. No matter in what way I do it. But the top officials in Education, they order us to use the textbooks printed in the United States of America, and in Great Britain. I think that is *foolish*...So those textbooks don't suit me....I try to teach them step by step. So we begin with the most primitive things. And little by little. So for example, for a month, I teach them, and we train only in the present tense...So in a month, they can speak what they do every day, regularly. Then we come to the present continuous tense. That is we have pictures, we play, imagine things, and we use the present continuous tense.

He noted the irony in the new demands for the use of foreign texts.

I was taught, many many years ago at the pedagogical college, and our teacher at the pedagogical college, he was punished because he was using a book published somewhere abroad in a capitalist country. We had to take a Soviet textbook - a foolish one - at that time.

He lamented the capacity or willingness of students to express opinions and employ critical thinking, despite his efforts to encourage them. To him, it seemed they wanted high marks for no effort. He saw this attitude as a legacy of the Soviet era.

...they are ready to repeat as parrots. They don't think. They are angry with me when I ask them this question: what do you think? She says, 'I don't know' - that is, she doesn't want to think. She is ready to repeat what is written in the textbook. If I give her a satisfactory mark, that is, a 3, rather low, she asks me 'Why?' If she retold the paragraph perfectly, not a single idea of her own...The problem with the kids is 75 years of authoritarian regime. We used to obey the party line; as a result our kids still do not think, do not want to think, and can't think.

Mikhail came from an interesting background, and was happy to talk about it when we got to the subject. He had been a good student, and an early stroke of luck sealed his career fate.

I was lucky. When I was a schoolboy we had changes in this country. Well, so, when I was six I went to school. That was rather early, because usually we had to go to school when we were seven. But I was bright, so the smallest boy in the class, but not bad. All excellent marks I had in the beginning. And I was from a very poor family. And I went to the school that was nearby. When I became a pupil of the sixth form, the first so-called specialised English-speaking school was organised in Perm. And that was the very school that I studied at. So all the officials sent their kids to that specialised school, and they couldn't push me out because I lived nearby....So I learned English, and we had I think two hours of English every day. So after school I could speak English...I realised that the only thing that I can do is speak English...I became a student of the pedagogical college in the English department.

His first posting (about which he had no choice) he remembered more for the freedom and pleasure of new independence than for concerns about effective teaching.

...for three years worked in a village - alone, without my parents - the happiest days of my life. I had money and no parents - I was 21 when I finished college! ...there the director understood that the kids didn't need any education at all because their parents were miners and they were going to become miners in the future. Especially the English

language. Well, it was really long ago. I had only one hour a week of English. That was not enough. So the main aim was to keep the kids inside the classroom during those 40 minutes. But still at the end of the 10th form, they take the exam. And I was the only English-speaking teacher at the school. So we found another teacher of English in another school, so she came to my examination, and I told her what mark to give and then another day she invited me to her exam - so no problems... (The people in the countryside) usually don't see the need of education. But then it depends on the parents. If the parents are just villagers, collective farmers they were, they were clever, rather clever, they told their children, you see how hard life is? If you study well, you will go to the city to study there. You will become educated, and then you will not work as hard as we do in the fields here... So even in those classes in the village school, I had bright boys and girls, and after school they studied at the institute, and now they live here in town. When they see me they say thank you.

He went on to teach in town, and eventually joined the staff of the English department at the main university. A family crisis (the death of a child) had prevented him from completing his doctorate, and set back his academic career. He had also had a period of working as a translator in a factory, which he hated, making him realise that teaching was his profession. He had joined his wife teaching at this school in 1990. He generally felt nostalgic for the way pupils were when he was in school, and in his early days of teaching.

We were more enthusiastic than these children. We had to fight for a place in the life. As for these kids, they're all from very well-to-do families, so even if they get a bad mark in this or that subject she (the head teacher) gives orders, and we fill out a form, and we have a new roof... I try to work only with the people who are eager to know. Sometimes, some pupils have no abilities to study properly, but they have a desire. I support them.

The structural changes to education had produced unforeseen effects, many of them divisive and negative. Some of the new private and specialist schools were not what they promised to be.

Education nowadays is divided. We have comprehensive secondary schools, and we have specialised schools, colleges, and well, those schools have a lot of names, different names. And the education there - you must pay for the education there. At the secondary schools you

don't pay. So English there, or any foreign language at the secondary school for the majority of boys and girls is zero. As for those schools where kids or the parents of the kids must pay money: I think they slap the kids, or do something because they paid money, so they must have the results. So the best pupils, the most gifted pupils are taken into those specialised schools nowadays. And on the whole I think that the education level is falling down. And very fast. Because there are so-called elite schools - well, this one, for example - and they give education, really. But all the others. No future for those kids from ordinary schools, I think. They are not taught. The classes are huge. For example, I have seven, nine or ten pupils in my class when I teach them English. And I worked in an ordinary school for some time and had 40 students. How can I? Impossible.

He felt that the teacher's job had generally become more difficult.

It is more difficult nowadays to be a teacher because of all those regulations - foolish regulations - that come from the education board...For example, they say it is modern nowadays at every lesson to use the video. Just for five minutes. They insist. But we have only one video here in our school...so I take my group, I bring them here, that group must find a place to go. Then it's half broken, this video system, I don't know how to operate the machine, so - no lesson! But they - the officials - write 'yup, at the lesson he used the video'. No result though.

Although not frequently observed, Mikhail explained that he had to report his activities to officials, and this sense of pressure and accountability permeated much of his discussion of the current situation in teaching.

In discussing democratic education, Mikhail noted that the old system was supposedly democratic too, and that new definitions of democracy had contributed to the breakdown of discipline in schools in their zeal to embrace children's every need.

We had democracy. Now we have democracy. So the same. But nowadays that means that everything is done for the kids. So if they want to run, so they must relax after sitting at that lesson! If they want to smoke, there is a special place for the kids to smoke! I don't understand that. The child is always right. That is the motto.

The first lesson I observed involved 11 students in year six. Mikhail taught all his classes in a language laboratory, although he laughingly said that he only

used tapes when he felt lazy. That day's lesson was based on a chapter in the textbook on 'Transportation in Britain'. At the start of the lesson, Mikhail sat at the front of the class, reviewing the topic, and 'warming them up' by asking a few general questions: "What did we speak about Monday?" "What do we speak about today?" "What day is it today?" "Is it cold? What is the temperature?" The students stood to answer questions. Wrong answers - such as a response of the date (7 April) instead of the day (Tuesday) - were ignored, and clues to the right answer given as prompts. The students were initially shy about answering, and Mikhail turned to me and indirectly chided them, "They don't want to speak". Turning to the day's topic, he asked the students, "What kinds of transport do we know?" The students listed a range of modes, and Mikhail expanded on some of them: "Steamers - a good word," "yes, horses - in the country", "yes, the underground in the city". The lesson then turned to the content in the textbook. "How do Londoners call their underground? Open your books please, to page 128. Look the text through, and try to find the answer to my question." A series of questions about the underground, based on the passage, followed. Students answered in English sentences, occasionally reading directly from the text, while Mikhail corrected pronunciation and grammar mistakes. Occasionally difficult points were clarified in Russian; at one point, he publicly checked with me whether he was pronouncing a word correctly. Some more opinion-based questions followed, such as "What do you think - why are the buses bright red?" ("A question they will never answer" - he said to me), and "How do you like to travel?" Several of the students answered that they preferred to fly. This prompted a drill: "How does he like to travel?" "How do they like to travel?" When one girl could not answer, the girls around her whispered the correct response to her. The lesson finished with Mikhail

explaining in English why he preferred to travel by train, and then he dismissed the class in Russian.

In discussing the lesson, Mikhail said that it was quite typical. He used a textbook from 1975 - he said he still preferred the old Soviet texts as a base because of their thorough coverage of grammar; then, later on, "I can use anything if they know grammar". "To please the bosses", he also inserted material from foreign texts, or other resources. He said that the group I had observed were not easy to teach, because they "fight" his desire to make them think and "learn the words" and the grammatical forms.

They didn't do that. So the plan is not fulfilled. I wanted them to speak about the transportation in London, so I wanted to talk to them about Moscow, the difference between London and Moscow...But we were so short of time because I had to explain this of that word...But in different groups, the lesson is different. If they are eager, and they know the material, so could even not read the text at all, I could just chat. Because they have travelled a lot; they have visited different countries, so I could ask them about the cities that we know nothing about.

It's more interesting when they hear new information; they are ready to absorb the information. Here you see they answer just 'yes', 'no', 'yes', 'no', but I am teaching English...I want them at least to repeat the sentence that I used. When I ask them questions, I try to use special forms, grammar forms, and if she just says 'yes', it doesn't mean that she can answer in a sentence without any mistakes.

He was aware that despite the 'elite' school status, a number of the children had learning problems, which made his life more difficult: "The boy in the back row, the big one that couldn't answer that it was Tuesday today - he must see a doctor. No memory, absolutely. Sometimes he says that he wants, and he tries, but he can't".

When asked whether relations with students were easier or more difficult than they used to be, Mikhail replied:

Well, on the one hand, the relations are easier. Well, it's not a military school now, so they are more open. They have their own views and they express their views. They are not afraid to be punished. If one says she believes in God, nowadays it's natural. So there is an openness, so to say. And sometimes even they know more than I do. I've never been to Vienna, for example, or Thailand, but they know. And when I listen to them, I don't pay attention to the mistakes while they speak. But on the other hand, they are so free nowadays, they don't punish them. They have no punishment nowadays. They are so free that if they are lazy, I cannot make them study. And the officials want me to give only good marks to the pupils.

The school itself had changed since *perestroika*, and conditions for teachers had worsened.

I boasted when I was here in 1990, all the doors to all the classes were open, and you could walk through the corridor, and see what they were doing. The kids were listening, the teacher was explaining. No people running around. And now half the school is not at the lessons, but sitting in the hall there, or at the canteen, or smoking on the porch somewhere.

Everything becomes worse and worse. And they don't pay money to teachers. I have 32 hours a week, and hard work it is, really...For those 32 hours, I don't get a million roubles a month. I get less. That is nothing nowadays. And they don't pay regularly. So how to live?

These conditions had complicated relationships with children and parents, especially those who were successful capitalists themselves:

They hate us, those kids from well-to-do families. Not all of them - it depends on the bringing up in the family. But the attitude toward people in the family - the attitude of their parents influences the attitude towards people in the children.

I noted again that he seemed to feel a lot of pressure from above, and that he appeared to experience very limited freedom of choice in what he did and how he did it, perhaps even more than under the old regime. He replied:

...that word, freedom. The teacher never had, doesn't have, and will never have freedom. We have that schedule, those programmes, those plans, and well, pedagogics is such a science that you can always find mistakes in the work of any teacher, even a brilliant one.

Being in a specialist school also afforded him some protection, as their programmes were able to vary from the standard curriculum, but the officials still “pressed and pushed” him.

With all these demands and constraints, what motivated him? Originally, it was his affection for a good teacher and his love of the language.

...my first teacher of English was an exile. With her parents she was thrown out of the country just after the revolution, and she went to China and she was brought up there. And she knew English very well so she started teaching. Maybe that influenced me. I loved the teacher. And I loved the language. It was easy for me; I don't know why...It's natural. If you ask about what subject do you prefer, they don't speak about the subject. They speak about the teacher, the person.

More recently, it was the thanks from students that kept him going, even though it was often late in coming.

...if you stay here it means that you don't work for money. You like the job. They know that. Even if they give you little, I'll stay.

When they see me they say thank you. That is what we work for. For those thanks from kids in future...I work for the results. I do it in the best way that I can, and then in five or ten years they come back and say, 'Thank you, Sir'. I work for that word.

He had spent quite a lot of time abroad, especially in the US, and he had reflectively compared the practices that he observed there with his own experiences. “...with great interest I attended all those lessons there; I tried to learn about the methods of teaching there and the methods of teaching here, the positive and negative sides of their training”. His own methods were eclectic though, and not easy to define:

They always ask: 'What methods do you use?' I don't know what methods I use. I just teach...Specialists in methods come to my classes. They say, 'Oh! You use certain methods! And start enumerating those methods, and coining them, and I don't even know the word (laughs).

He had quite a lot of influence within the English department, although the responsibility and power ostensibly lay elsewhere.

All of them (the teachers) are my former students! So what can they say?...Our chair is an ordinary teacher, one of the girls, but as head and chair she is responsible for our paperwork, our dealing with the officials, but before going to the top she consults me, she asks my recommendation what to do. I'm like the black cardinal (laughs). I'm older you know - much older than all of them.

Beyond the school, he felt quite powerless in terms of political movements in the country; he felt that this attitude generally characterised the intelligentsia. He did, however, feel it was important to try to influence positively students' political values, especially when they were manifested in extreme forms; however, the current moral ambiguity made such influence difficult.

I think that I see everything. But I'm not ready to do anything, because I don't believe that it will change the situation. So I'm political in my way - I'm afraid of this and that. That's politics.

A few days ago sat in front of me a boy from the 10th form. So I was teaching all of them. Suddenly I saw a badge or pin with that fascist sign. Of course I didn't stop the lesson, but I started speaking about parties, this party especially. And I asked him, and he answered. He was very excited, made a lot of mistakes but he wanted to express his ideas, his thoughts, why he is a member of that party. And then I began comparing this party with Hitler in Germany in the 30s. He was against that, but couldn't say anything because I've read more and know more than he does. So I think that is my political platform. I try, I do try to bring them up in a proper way. But what is the proper way? Nobody knows.

In our closing discussion, we agreed that Mikhail tended to emphasise the professional side of his teaching - reflected in his commitment to his subject area, and his professional influence beyond his classroom and into the

departmental and school level, and also through his work at the pedagogical university. The personal side was also important - especially since his teaching methods appeared to come “from within”, and the social dimension of the profession was also a consideration, although he felt powerless to do much to change things. He used an interesting expression to describe how he coped with having to live among values which he did not believe in: “I have to break myself”. We discussed his ability to speak openly about the negative side of the changes; he raised an issue which shed interesting light on the cross-cultural dynamics of the whole study:

When I speak Russian, I find it easy to conceal things, and to speak vividly without saying what I mean. In English, it is different.

In terms of his responses to change, Mikhail acknowledged that his experience made him feel that he was able to judge effectively what was best for his students - perhaps more effectively than the officials wielding power. While he would have liked at times to resist some aspects of the changes, he felt a strategic form of compliance was the better way.

I can resist, in the kitchen speaking with my wife. Criticism: that is how we would say it in Russia... I cannot be very resistant working here, because the dog never bites the hand that feeds her.

He then laughed, and added, in perfectly idiomatic English: “Never piss against the wind”.

* * * *

Mikhail’s case was unique in some ways: his unequivocal view of the reforms as ‘top-down’, and his strategic compliance to them, was especially interesting in the light of his long and respected professional career, which had included

time as a teacher trainer. He experienced many of the competing imperatives: *teacher as authoritarian versus teacher as facilitator; teacher control versus pupil freedom; children's motivation as extrinsic versus intrinsic; knowledge transmission versus collaborative learning; ideologised curriculum versus lack of clear alternative; individualised versus common curriculum.* What made his experience of these competing imperatives different was that he felt he was actually quite clear about his position on them, but felt pressure to comply to external demands. Thus for him the real dilemmas were *teacher as free agent versus teacher as instrument of policy, and teacher's judgements versus external pressures.*

His situation at an elite school highlighted for him how teachers had been left behind in the rush to take advantage of capitalism. He also had a unique perspective, in that he had had the opportunity to travel, and to observe practice in other countries. Yet, on balance, his preference was largely for the pedagogical modes and resources of communist times, and he was nostalgic for the way that students were in those days: more enthusiastic, respectful and pliable. He also felt that children had not changed where they needed it most: the ability to think critically and express opinions. While the force of his opinions was unique, many of the other teachers, especially in Russia but some South African teachers too, had shades of these opinions in their own thinking. For Mikhail, his priority as a teacher was to teach the children English: this meant the vocabulary, and the grammar, and only when those things had been achieved should other concerns be addressed. Newer modes of teaching which advocated entertainment, and protecting the child from harsh assessments and punishment for wrongdoing, were impediments to these aims. However, he had found a way that he could live quietly with these contradictions. "Breaking

himself” allowed him to maintain the integrity of his identity while divorcing himself from the aspects of his professional situation which fit poorly with his ideas about education.

Chapter Seven – Conclusion

This study has investigated the nature of educational reform in two new democracies. It has focused on Russian and South African primary school teachers' perceptions of and responses to these reforms, using case studies to trace a close-grained picture of their attitudes and practice, and of how these fit together. It has revealed some of the competing imperatives which they face, and some of the ways in which they reconcile, or at least live with, these dilemmas. In this concluding chapter, I would like briefly to recapitulate some of the main findings, and consider the implications of these for comparative education methodology, for theory about teachers and educational reform, and for possible strategies to make the reform process a more meaningful and viable one for teachers.

Educational Reform

Critical literature-based examination of educational reforms in Russia and South Africa has revealed a quagmire of problems. The policies are complex, and occasionally ambiguous or even contradictory. Their ideological basis has ostensibly been democratisation of education, but other, not necessarily complementary imperatives – political or economic – have been integrated within them. In the case of both countries, scope and pace of reform have been constraining issues, as have serious economic problems. The ideology of the market and demands for equity are at odds. At the classroom level, evidence from the literature and from this study suggests that practitioners are unsure about what to do with new curricula, and that pedagogy has changed little. Even where school personnel are willing – which, in a qualified way, is most

often the case - they are often short of resources, professional capacities, and training, or the existing culture is so deeply entrenched that shifting it is an overwhelming challenge. Overall, the reforms in both countries, while receiving fairly widespread popular support, have been constrained in intrinsic, situational, environmental, material and organisational, and ideological terms. The resulting variances in interpretation, and implementation problems, are not surprising under the circumstances.

These flaws and constraints are not unique to these contexts, and nor are the outcomes. It is apparent from international research that even in settings where policy initiatives are less demanding, more compelling and better-resourced, the policy script is still enacted in a variety of interpretations in different settings.

Teachers' Experiences of Educational Reform

In addition to the constraints outlined above, the cross-case findings of this empirical study have revealed patterns which help to explain why at the policy-practice interface teachers have found classroom implementation of these reforms so problematic. A series of interviews about their lives and practice as teachers, combined with observations of lessons, uncovered a number of competing imperatives pulling them in many directions at once. Bearing in mind that most teachers in both countries have had long acculturation in the old system - even if they disagreed with it - many of the ensuing dilemmas they faced were created by post-apartheid and post-communist educational and social changes. These dilemmas concerned the nature of teaching and being a teacher, curriculum, and pedagogy. Rather than the new superseding the old, it

was clear that much of the time the two co-existed, albeit not very comfortably. Sometimes it was a case of a teacher having genuine doubts about the appropriateness of new approaches in her or his classroom situation; at other times it was more a case of distinct layers of attitude, with differences between them being unresolved. A typical manifestation of these competing imperatives was a teacher's vociferous support in interview for pupil autonomy and democratic classroom relationships, combined with highly authoritarian discourse while actually interacting with pupils. Another type of example was a teacher having the conviction that teaching comes from within, being by nature a 'calling' to which one is born; such a teacher often struggled to cope with the limitations of his or her capacities in using new curricula or pedagogical styles, and to accept the need for change and for guidance. Important in these new democracies were the dilemmas around political education: many teachers were cynical about politics, or felt that political education was inappropriate for young children, or felt ill-equipped to offer alternatives to the 'brainwashing' approaches to political education found under the previous authoritarian regimes.

Teachers' Responses to Competing Imperatives

Teachers coped with these competing imperatives in a number of different ways. In observing classroom practice, a wide range of variations was evident, from highly authoritarian styles to innovative child-centred activities, and sometimes strange hybrids of extremes. Many teachers claimed to have altered their practice significantly, and may well have done, yet to the outsider the lessons are evidently quite traditional.

One of the most obvious and interesting patterns concerned the issue of personal identity in the context of the fragmentation brought about by radical social and educational changes. Teachers who were aware, or made aware, of their own dilemmas and contradictions were very keen to try to explain them in terms of a coherent personal narrative which bridged the 'old' with the 'new' – a coherence which was not always easy to achieve, and the effort of which brought some of them to sadness or resignation. Some tried to ignore the impact of reform, for example, or complied strategically, for an easy life.

None of the teachers in this study complied unequivocally in word or deed with the reforms; yet, nor did any resist them outright. It was the shades of response in between where teachers were situated. As the case studies revealed, a variety of factors working together influenced how individual teachers responded, many of these part of their life history, and others arising out of their local and school contexts.

The National Contexts and Teachers' Experiences

Having highlighted some of the similarities and differences between the Russian and South African contexts in chapter three, it is worth returning briefly to some key differences here, in the light of the findings of the study. Among the respondents, four findings relate particularly clearly to differences in the nationalities of the teachers. Firstly, the diversity in South Africa was reflected in the diversity of situations and responses of South African teachers. To compare Sindy, Mary or Oliver's school with Ilse or Joy's is to compare

developing country standards of resourcing with those of the most affluent West. In addition to reflecting huge differences in their situations, their responses reflect very different teaching cultures and levels of education. They also showed clear identification with their own racial groups, more than with the nation as a whole. While the Russian teachers were very much individuals, it is still much easier to make generalisations about them as a group.

Secondly, while its legacies, especially at the classroom level, live on, the ANC has essentially dismantled the apartheid system of education, especially from the point of view of structure and financing, and have tried to do so in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. By comparison, the Russian policy changes, while comprehensive, have been more in the line of serious modifications, rather than complete overhaul. These changes in South Africa were brewing and anxiously awaited for many years while the ANC was the unofficial opposition, while the Russian transition has largely been managed by people who were already in position during the communist era. These factors exacerbate the effects of the policy differences. This is reflected in the responses of teachers; generally South Africans tended to draw a more distinct line between the past and the present than did the Russian teachers, whether discussing structures, curriculum, pedagogy, or wider social issues.

Thirdly, how equity issues have been manifested in the two countries is virtually mirror-imaged: while South Africa struggles with redressing the imbalances of apartheid, Russia opens its previously largely equitable system to differentiating market forces. Russian teachers in this study clearly found this situation unfortunate, even in the 'winning' schools, and the resource

constraints in schools on the 'sink' end of the new continuum have taken serious tolls. Meanwhile, in South Africa, conditions have improved somewhat - albeit very slowly - for teachers in the poorest schools, although among South African teachers it was those whose status has suffered most who had the most to say about the subject. Additionally, the existing inequities are such that relief for the disadvantaged is minimal, and the fact that social class may technically be replacing race as the definitive marker of advantage does little to redress the imbalances of the status quo. These divergent outcomes of reform as related to equity in these two different national contexts highlight some of the complexities inherent in definitions and interpretations of democracy. Resources are clearly an important aspect of the transition from the point of view of teachers, and the unintended problems that their unequal distribution creates is a critical aspect of their lives under the new order.

Finally, problems with the 'breakdown' of the culture of teaching and learning in South Africa have not been touched by this process of redressing inequalities, and they are very evident in the classrooms and school settings of Sindy and Oliver in particular. In Russia, the persistence of a strong professional culture and high levels of pupil commitment are also evident, and taken for granted by the teachers involved. In a sense this difference is a similarity - while the cultures of education in Russia on the one hand, and of the historically deprived schools in South Africa on the other, are very different, both these cultures have persisted.

Methodological Implications

Traditionally, comparative education has been concerned with differences and similarities at the level of systems. Policy analysis of this kind has been one aspect of this study. However, this study is unusual in its use of case studies of individual teachers in two different national settings, and in its focus on the life history and personal perceptions of these individuals and the bearing of these on their classroom practice and social agency. In this way it contributes to an important intellectual movement in qualitative research, and within comparative education, in bringing together biography and pedagogy. Again, unusually, the national context is one of many explanatory units, rather than being a deterministic category, and the multi-level methodology reflects and contributes to developments within comparative education. Giddens suggests that in late modernity, "...for the first time in human history, 'self' and 'society' are interrelated in a global milieu" (1991:32). This perspective does not deny the importance of the state, or of other, intermediate levels of control and influence in education. However, it is possible to look at educational change and its relationship to democracy as a global phenomenon, in which individuals participate directly. It is also possible, as Giddens does, to talk about *human* responses to change in the context of late modernity; in highlighting the commonalities experienced by these teachers, as well as their unique responses, this study attempts this.

Implications for Theory

As the literature review outlined, many studies have shown that teachers mediate policy in a variety of ways, and that a number of different factors about themselves and their contexts influence this process. A growing literature on teacher thinking and teacher identity has illustrated how personal and professional identities are often bound together for teachers, and international comparisons have shown that the nature of these identities is shaped in part by the professional culture in which teachers operate. Other studies have generated theory about the ways in which incompatible forces pull teachers in different directions. This study contributes to these bodies of knowledge by offering detailed illustrations of how teachers in their own situations interact with these political, cultural, professional and personal factors in two new democracies. It reveals how competing imperatives, as theorised by Alexander (1995), arise from this interaction, and how teachers attempt to maintain the integrity of their identities in the face of them. It calls into question discourses about teacher 'resistance' to change, and about the 'conservatism' of schools, both of which belie the complexity of the process and disown the flaws which originate with policy itself and with strategies for its implementation. Many of the competing imperatives found in this study are found in other contexts as well, but the dramatic nature of change in Russia and South Africa has made them especially acute and fragmenting. Yet insights about teachers' responses to educational reform, such as those found in the PACE and Bristaix studies (Pollard *et al* 1994 and Broadfoot and Osborn 1993) are relevant to these teachers. The nature of changes to teachers' classroom practice, and the

attitudinal and circumstantial factors which affect this process of change, as outlined in the cross-case analysis, provides an illustration of these theories at work in these settings. Additionally, Giddens' (1991) analysis of the nature of self-identity in situations of change, and the need for coherence in all situations of demanding adjustment, helps to explain why similar responses are found in such different contexts of educational reform and social and political transformation. Thus the study contributes to the development of theories about education and classroom processes in states in transition. At another level, more general understanding of the implementation of reforms to education policy is also enhanced by learning from situations of extreme, rapid change such as those in this study.

Implications for Policy

These are almost too commonplace to rehearse, yet the same bad habits of policy creation and implementation persevere in so many contexts: lack of consultation; poor understanding of school, classroom and teacher realities; over-ambitious scope and pace; inauthentic agendas; and shortage of political will and fiscal base to adequately support implementation. These need to be addressed. One under-used source of information for policy-makers is qualitative studies, including case study research such as this, which offers insight into the nature of the processes which policy-makers are trying to affect.

Implications for Teacher Education

Based on what has been learned from these teachers, I would like to add my voice to the call for modes of professional development which nurture reflective practice and which give teachers opportunities to bring together the often fragmented relationship between their own identities, their classroom practice, and social changes. People who have never experienced democratic relationships in the classroom, as pupils or subsequently as teachers, cannot be given manuals on how to develop them: they need to know what these relationships feel like from the inside, and to reflect on the importance and potential of those experiences. Likewise, there is little point in training teachers in how to teach children political education when they neither recognise nor acknowledge the importance of political processes in their own lives. Reflective models of professional development are certainly not new, but they are often depicted as frivolous, and perhaps even dangerous, by those whose views of education are driven by economic efficiency and based on market ideology – and these views are currently in the ascendant. They have also been interpreted in such a way as to call into question their appropriateness for all contexts. However, this study has shown how powerful are a teacher's own ideas about reform and about his or her own identity, along with good old unreconstructed habit, in determining their practice. These can only be developed to everyone's benefit through reflection and dialogue. It would be an interesting and very relevant research project to develop and test teacher education programmes which take into consideration local contexts, capacities and needs, reflexively integrating teacher biography, political education, and democratic modes of teaching and learning.

In Conclusion

This 'Tale of Twelve Teachers' has much to teach us about the processes of democratisation in education in Russia and South Africa. Teachers' perspectives reveal just how complex their tasks and roles are, and how much depends on their capacities and judgements. The research has provided a cautionary tale for those who would believe that introducing democratic reforms to education is a straightforward process. By providing a glimpse into the lives of some typical teachers, it has also shown the creative struggle that goes on in these classrooms as teachers come to grips with these new demands. If teachers are to be agents of social change in these new democracies, acknowledging and appreciating these struggles is a good beginning.

Appendix One: Interview Schedules, Case Studies

Interview Schedule:

Stages and Topics

STAGE ONE

Pre-observation: Biographical and professional details
Initial probes: professional attitudes
Background information on day's lessons

Biographical information

Name
Age (approximate)
Local? From where?
Marital/family status

Professional information

Nature of education/training (initial and in-service)
Length of service (total and at this school)
Classes taught - subjects, ages, numbers and nature of students
Extra responsibilities

Lesson Background Information

Could you tell me about the first couple of lessons today: your basic aims, the content you will be covering, and a little bit about the methods you will be using.

Openings - Issues of change, professional perspectives

Tell me about your own primary education as a child.
(material conditions, influential/memorable teachers, curriculum, pedagogical styles, structures, child's concerns, nature of pupil:teacher relationships)

How have schools changed since that time?

Why did you become a teacher?

Do you think the job of being a teacher is easier or more difficult than it used to be?
In what ways?

STAGE TWO

After 1 - 2 lesson observations: Pedagogy, current and evolutionary

Pedagogy

Was that a pretty typical lesson?

Do you feel that your aims were met? Why or why not?

Is there anything about the content, teaching methods and means of assessment in the lesson that is different from lessons you used to teach (or experience) during apartheid/communism?

Nominate one incident from the last lesson is somehow different from how things were then. (explore how and why different - improvement?)

Why did you.....in that way? (researcher-nominated incident: focusing on indicators of 'democratic' or 'non-democratic' practice, or aspects related to curricular or recommended pedagogical reforms, if insufficient exploration through teacher nomination)

In what ways has your practice changed generally since you started teaching? Have the changes all been by choice?

How do you feel about the ways things are changing in schools? (curriculum, pedagogy, structures, resources, SEN provision, morale). How about outside of schools? (equity, morale, justice, resources, freedom)

STAGE THREE

End of day one: Views of Self as Teacher, current and evolutionary
Influences on Teaching Attitudes and Practices

I as Teacher

What do you consider your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher to be?

What are the greatest challenges and rewards of your job?

What would help you to do your job better now?

How do you think your colleagues would describe you as a teacher?

What do you see yourself doing in ten years' time?

Influences

Please reflect on what part each of these has played in your current teaching life and practice.

Professional

- your education and training
- the amount and type of teaching experience you have had
- mentors and influential others
- the school you work in and your colleagues
- the post apartheid/communism reforms in education
- your understandings about what happens in other schools in other situations or countries

Personal

- when, where, how you grew up
- your feelings about children
- your opinions about the world around you: political or otherwise
- the fact that you are a black/white younger/older man/woman (social as well as personal dimensions of race and gender)
- your religious beliefs

Social

- growing up/training/teaching under apartheid/communism
- the social changes that have occurred since the end of apartheid/communism
- the current economic situation
- how teachers are regarded in your society
- cultural traditions and values

Are there any influences that we haven't mentioned which you would consider to be important?

STAGE FOUR

Day two: Debriefing, reflection and verification (or revision)

Feedback and discussion on the following:

- your vision of teaching and modes of practice
- the influences on your teaching attitudes and practice: personal, professional and social
- how the reforms have affected you, and how you have effected them.

Have you considered these questions before?

What was it like to do so now?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1

Teacher Trainers/Pedagogical Institute Staff

I. Interview Information

- I.i Date
- I.ii Interviewee's name
- I.iii Interviewee's position
- I.iv Other relevant information

II. Structures for Teacher Training

- II.i What courses are available for prospective primary school teachers? What qualifications do these lead to?
- II.ii Do primary teachers specialise in any way, such as by subject area or age group?
- II.iii Who controls the following:
 - teacher accreditation and validation
 - inspection of teacher training institutions and courses
 - numbers and location of trainee teachers
 - where newly qualified teachers are appointed
- II.iv What is the role of the institute in supporting newly qualified and/or experienced teachers?

III. Teacher Training Courses

- III.i What is the academic and professional background of teacher trainers? Has this changed since the introduction of reforms?
- III.ii What are the main components of the primary teacher training course?
- III.iii To what extent do a) values education and b) dealing with students with special needs figure in the curriculum?

- III.iv Who determines curricular content for itt (with special reference to a) and b) above)?
- III.v What is the role of the school-based training in teacher preparation (ref to above)?
- III.vi To what extent, and in what ways, has itt course provision changed with the recent reforms? What further changes do you foresee (ref to above)?

IV. Theory, Assumptions and Initial Teacher Training

- IV.i In your opinion, what are a)the public perception and b) the professional perception of primary school teachers? What are seen to be their key attributes and abilities? What role are they considered to have in the implementation of social and political reforms?
- IV.ii To what extent have these perceptions been constant historically?
- IV.ii What are the current issues and debates surrounding teacher training nationally?
- IV.iii What are the main problems in the schools, which teacher training should seek to address? (ref to SEN)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2

School Head/Deputies

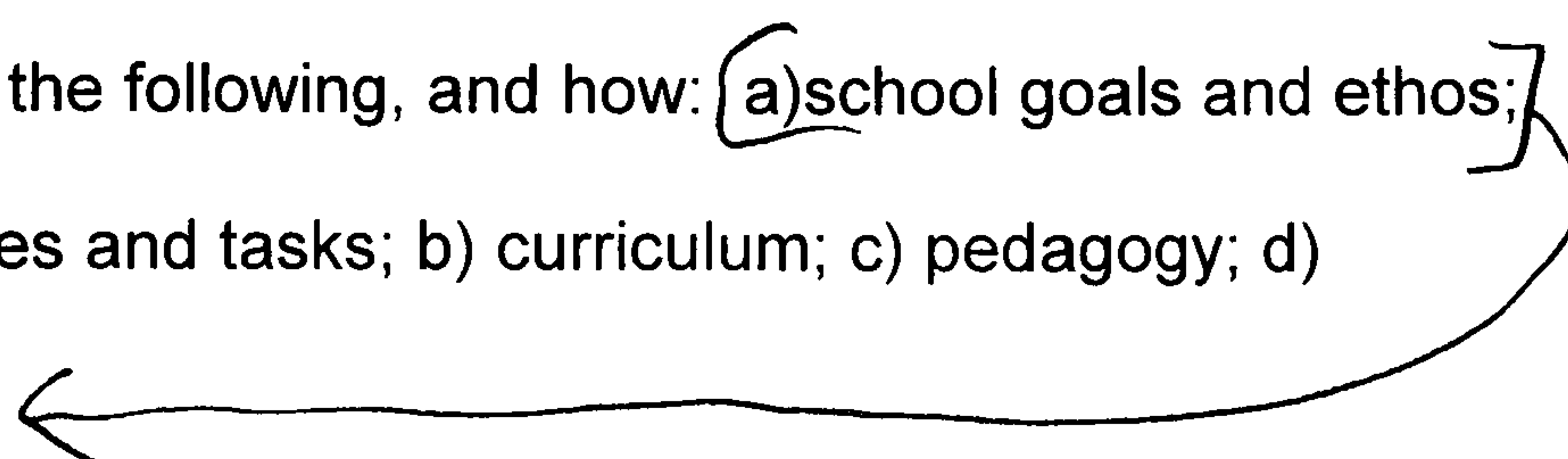
I. Interview Information

- I.i Date
- I.ii Interviewee's name
- I.iii Interviewee's position
- I.iv Other relevant information

II. School Information

- II.i To what body is the school responsible? How is this governed?
- II.ii How many pupils attend the school? How many are in the 'primary' division?
- II.iii What is the catchment area of the school? Describe the area.
- II.iv Is there selection for admittance to the school? On what basis?
- II.v What is the admissions policy for students with special needs?
On what basis was this policy created? Has it remained static?
- II.vi How many teachers and other staff members are there?
- II.vii How many classes are there? How are pupils distributed among them?

III. Management

- III.i Describe the posts of responsibility that exist, and how the responsibilities are distributed.
- III.ii Who decides the following, and how: (a) school goals and ethos;
b) teacher roles and tasks; b) curriculum; c) pedagogy; d) assessment
- 

IV. Values, Theories and Beliefs



- IV.i What expectations do each of the following have of the school?
(ref to values education as well as quality of delivery)
a) central government; b) local government; c) parents and community; d) teaching staff; e) you as head
- IV.ii To what extent are the expectations in conflict? Can they be reconciled and met?
- IV.iii Regarding the values and goals which guide the work of the school: which national needs is it most concerned with? How have you dealt with the radical changes in national needs in the past few years?
- IV.iv Which needs of the children are seen as most important? Does this vary depending on the age of the children?
- IV.v How far is it important to cater for different pupil needs and abilities? How about children with the most extreme special needs? How can their needs be met in the school and the classroom?

- IV.vi In your opinion, how do pupils learn most effectively? Which are the best teaching methods to accomplish this?
- IV.vii Which aspects of the curriculum are the most important? Why?
- IV.viii How important is the child's moral and social development?
What kind of collective values does the school seek to foster?
How are they fostered?
- IV.ix What are the characteristics of a really well-educated person?

V. Cohesion and Control

- V.i How important are cohesion and control? How are they maintained?
- V.ii What ceremonies or rituals are important?
- V.iii What is the system of rewards and sanctions for pupil behaviour?

VI. Challenges, Problems and Dilemmas

- VI.i What do you see as the most pressing challenges/problems for primary education in Russia today, at the national level?
- VI.ii What are the most pressing problems at the whole-school level?
- VI.iii At the classroom level?
- VI.iv Which of these do you see as universal? Which ones are unique to your country or school? Why?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 3

Class Teacher

I. Interview Information

- I.i Date
- I.ii Interviewee's name
- I.iii Interviewee's position
- I.iv Training
- I.v Experience
- I.vi Age-range of class taught
- I.vii Number of children in class
- I.viii other - *children w/special needs - identify.*

II. Points arising from classroom observation

III. Pupils in class

- III.i general characteristics - ages, backgrounds
- III.ii numbers with special needs - *what kinds of special needs?*
- III.iii What are the most pressing needs for most of the students?
- III.iv In your opinion, how do they learn best?
- III.v What do you expect them to achieve by the time they leave you, in academic terms?
- III.vi What do you expect them to achieve in personal and social terms?
- III.vii How can you help them to achieve these?

III.viii What do you as a teacher find most satisfying about teaching these children?

III.ix What do you find least satisfying?

IV. Management

IV.i Why is the room arranged this way?

IV.ii How do you maintain order in the classroom? (inc rewards and sanctions)

IV.iii How important do you think it is for children to have rights in classroom life? (eg in creating rules, in criticizing the teacher)

V. Curriculum

V.i Which subjects does the curriculum contain?

V.ii Which do you see as most important, and why?

V.iii Do you teach values or moral education separately?

V.iv Do you try to teach it within other curricular subjects?

V.v Who dictates what you should teach in terms of values?

V.vi Are you confident teaching all the subjects? How about values education? Where does the confidence or lack of it come from?

VI. Pedagogy

VI.i What are your main teaching methods?

VI.ii Why do you use these methods?

VI.iii Which teaching situations do you find easiest to handle? Which do you find most challenging?

VII. Diagnosis, Assessment and Differentiation

- VII.i How do you determine children's individual abilities and needs at the start of the year?
- VII.ii Do you receive any detailed information on children with special needs?
- VII.iii Do you give all children the same learning tasks, or do you give different tasks according to their abilities?
- VII.iv Do you give all children equal amounts of your time and attention? Who, if anyone, deserves special attention?
- VII.v What do you do about children with especially different abilities and needs?
- VII.vi How do you assess children during the year and at the end?
- VII.vii Who sets the standards for this assessment?
- VII.viii How, if at all, do you assess a child's moral or spiritual growth?

VIII. Influences on Teaching Practice

- VIII.i Why do you teach as you do? What have been the main influences on you as a teacher? (initial training? professional development? teachers you have admired? your colleagues? your personal experience?)
- VIII.ii How far do national and regional political considerations affect you in how and what you teach?

IX. Recent changes and the classroom teacher

- IX.i How have the recent political and social changes impacted on students in the classroom? Have the students and their needs changed?
- IX.ii Have you changed the content of what you teach? How? Why or why not?
- IX.iii Have you changed your teaching methods? If so, how? Why or why not? I

- X.iv Has your level of job satisfaction changed as a result of the reforms? For better or worse, and why?
- IX.v On the whole, do you feel that the social and political changes have been positive? Do you want to support them?
- IX.vi Do you feel that teachers are under pressure to support the reforms? If so, where does the pressure come from, and how are you expected to give your support as a teacher?

X. Professional Dilemmas

- X.i What do you feel are the main dilemmas and difficult tasks you face as a teacher, with regard to a) the children, b) the content of the curriculum, c) teaching methods, d) classroom management and control?
- X.ii Which of these do you see as universal to the job of a teacher?
- X.iii Which of these do you see as particular to this country?
- X.iv Which of these do you believe to be particular to you and your situation?

XI. Visions

- XI.i What do you believe to be the characteristics of a really well-educated person?
- XI.ii In what ways would you like to see the system of education change in order to achieve a nation of well-educated children?

TEACHING OBSERVATION DATA

I. Pre-session information from teacher

- I.i Date
- I.ii Teacher's name
- I.iii Age and number of children in class
- I.iv Subject/focus of session to be observed
- I.v Specific goals for session

II. Post-lesson:

- II.i Main stages and times, from field notes
- II.ii Specific subject matter
- II.iii Organisational strategies employed
(whole class, group, individual)
- II.iv Teacher's distribution of time between pupils:
roughly equal, slightly unequal, or very unequal?
- II.v Extent and manner of teacher's differentiation among
pupils, by perceived ability
- II.vi Extent and manner of differentiation by other characteristics
(eg by gender)
- II.vii Extent and manner of attention to pupils with special needs
- II.viii Character of feedback to pupils, and pupil response
- II.ix Management of behaviour
- II.x Overall character of teacher-pupil relationships
- II.xi Overall character of pupil behaviour
- II.xii Overall character of pupil-pupil relationships, and its
link to teacher action
- II.xiii Critical incidents, and how they were handled
- II.xiv Classroom rituals and their functions

III. Values transmission

- III.i Norms, rules or conventions conveyed or observed
- III.ii Values conveyed or exchanged (explicit), and how
- III.iii Values conveyed or exchanged (tacit), and how
- III.iv Curricular aspects related to democratic values
- III.v Pedagogical aspects related to democratic values
- III.vi Classroom management aspects related to democratic values

Dataset (as at 12 June 1998)

Key to records:

- 1 = tape
- 2 = observation schedule
- 3 = detailed field notes
- 4 = notes (brief or from memory after event)

Russia - Fieldwork One (Exploratory Phase) - October/November 1996

Interviews

- Tamara, director School 134 (1,3 x 2)
- Natasha, director School 6 (3)
- Natalya, teacher trainer, PPSU (3)
- Anya, director of 'Palace of Youth and Culture' (3)
- Ludmilla, director School 132 (3)
- Leonid, teacher School 132 (4)
- Ludmilla, director School 19 (3)
- Andrei, vice-rector PPSU (1,3)
- Alexandra, deputy director (Primary) School 134 (1,3)
- Olga and Ludmilla, teachers School 134 (4)
- Tatyana, teacher School 134 (1,3)
- Nicholai, teacher School 134 (4)
- Yeleana, teacher School 134 (3)
- PPSU trainee teachers (1,3)

Recorded Observations

- year 2 Russian (2)
- year 11 history (3)
- year 2 maths (3)
- year 3 reading (3)
- ecology club meeting (4)
- children at play (2)
- year 11 English, year 6 English (participated - 4)
- year 1 maths (2)
- year 2 Russian (3)
- year 1 music (2)
- technical classes for SEN pupils (4)

Other Data

- field diary
- PPSU documents
- photos

South Africa - Fieldwork One (Exploratory Phase) - February 1997

Interviews

- Mr Meyer, head, Anton Van Wouw Primary (1,3)
- Miss Lingenfelder, deputy head, Waterkloof Primary (3)
- Mrs Shee, teacher, Waterkloof (4)
- Felicity, teacher, Waterkloof (3)
- Mrs Sefolo, head, Blair Atholl (1,3)
- Lorraine, INSET lecturer (3)
- Kevin, ODA (4)
- Rita, head, Mamelodi Primary (3)
- children, Blair Atholl (4)
- librarian, Blair Atholl (4)

Recorded Observations

- year 3 integrated language arts (2)
- year 5 reading (2)
- year 1 Afrikaans (2)
- year 1 English (2)
- several lesson fragments, Mamelodi township school (4)
- staff meeting, Waterkloof (3)

Supplementary Data

- field diary
- ODA aid documents
- photographs
- publicity material, Blair Atholl Farm School

**South Africa - Fieldwork Two (Main phase - Case studies) -
January/February 1998**

Case Study Data

Sunetra

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (2 x 2; 3,4)¹
- interview with head and deputy - school and community information and general issues (3)
- OBE meeting (4)
- document - safety handout
- photos

Sindy

- interview a (3)
- interview b (3)
- interview c (3)
- interview d (3)
- interview with other staff members on change (1,3)
- interview with head - school and community information and general issues (3)
- recorded lesson observations (1 x 2; 3,4)
- photos
- whole-school event - athletics practice (3)

Mary

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (2 x 2; 3,4)
- interview with head - school and community information and general issues (3)
- document - teaching schedule
- discussion with other teachers in staff room (4)
- photos

¹ ie 2 lessons recorded on schedule; field notes and summary notes on other observed lessons

Ilse

- interview a (3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (2 x 2; 3,4)
- teaching materials
- school and community information from head and Petra (3)
- photos

Oliver

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- interview with Rose (head) a (1,3)
- interview with Rose - school and community information (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations - Oliver (1 x 2; 3,4)
- recorded lesson observation - Rose (1 x 2)
- photographs
- discussion with staff members (4)

Joy

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (3 x 2; 3,4)
- teaching materials
- school information from parent interview (3)
- discussion with head (4)
- school publicity documents
- photos

Supplementary Data

- field diary
- baseline survey on teachers in Gauteng townships
- interviews with INSET providers (4 x 3)
- discussion with Kevin, DfID (4)
- photos

Russia - Fieldwork Two (Main phase - Case studies) April 1998

Case Study Data

Anya

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (2 x 2; 3,4)
- children's work
- interview with headteacher and deputy - school and community information, general issues (3)
- interview with school psychologists (4)
- document - school prospectus
- photos

Natasha

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (2 x 2; 3,4)
- interview with school head - school and community information, general issues (3)
- photos

Tatyana

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (1 x 2; 3,4)
- interview with school head - school and community information, general issues (3)
- photos

Ludmilla

- interview a (1,3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (1 x 2; 3,4)
- children's work
- photos
- interview a with Tonya (1,3)

Mikhail

- interview a (3)
- interview b (1,3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (1 x 2; 3,4)
- interview with parents - school and community information (3)
- photos

Marina

- interview a (3)
- interview b (3)
- interview c (1,3)
- interview d (1,3)
- recorded lesson observations (2 x 2; 3,4)
- pupil work
- interview with headteacher - school and community information and general issues (3)
- photos

Supplementary Data

- INSET class discussion (1,3)
- interview with Tatyana Margola (Director of Education for Perm Region) (1,3)
- discussion with peripatetic school psychologist (4)
- discussion with Andrei Kolesnikov, vice-rector PPSU (4)
- observation of INSET lectures at PPSU (3,4)
- documents from PPSU on teachers and INSET training
- discussions with interpreters (4)
- field diary
- photographs

Appendix Four: Supplementary Interview Schedules, Phase Two

Topics for Discussion with INSET & Pre-service Trainers

Trainer:

Background (nature of project or institution, and previous experiences):

What do you see as the main changes which have occurred since the collapse of apartheid/communism in:

Teaching conditions

Teacher motivation (source and degree)

Teaching methods (prescribed and real)

Curriculum (prescribed and delivered)

Nature of candidates for initial or in-service training

SEN provision

What factors do you see as most significant in a teacher's willingness and ability to adjust practice and attitudes?

School and Community Information

Information obtained from:

Name of School:

Number of pupils:

Age/grade range:

Selection?

Fees?

Number of teachers and other staff:

Distribution of pupils among classes (by age, ability, multi-level? etc)

SEN students: numbers, types and provision

Description of school facilities:

Nature of catchment area:

Dear Michele,

Of course I remember you. The children to whose classes you went still mention your name and ask about you.

I read the analysis of your interviews with interest and, of course, I do not mind your having used them in your dissertation. It seems to me that you have expressed many of my thoughts even better than I would have been able to do myself. The problems that we discussed together still remain pressing. However, there is a progressive change in the situation, albeit a small one. Many problems regarding the school practice began to disappear gradually but slowly. On the other hand, other problems appeared such as the increased number of children in the school from non-Russian-language families.

A group of like-minded people gathered in our school this year, working on a project to establish a special correct-and-develop block for children with unusual educational needs. This block will include specialists such as a psychologist, a speech therapist, a defectologue¹, a social worker, a general practitioner, and school pedagogues. It is intended that these specialists offer comprehensive support and help to children with special educational needs like Sasha, whom you mention in your work. In fact, Sasha continues to study at our school and is now seventh class. Although his success in his studies is not very high, the teachers are happy that he attends the classes. And this, on the teachers' side, is already a gesture of tolerance towards the non-typical child.

I would like to note that one can already notice some progress in the teachers' attitude towards such children. An increasing number of pedagogues begin to understand their problems and try to help them. More teachers are now trying to get

¹ Translator's note: this term is used to translate the Russian defektolog (transliterated here).

more information and to self-educate themselves on this matter. This is so, because the number of children with such problems in our school is rising annually.

When you were here the building of the school was quite neglected, awaiting repair work. Now the repair work is over and the school began to look good. You are writing that our school works in three shifts. We have received an additional building to enlarge the school and now we work in two shifts - not in three as we used to do two years ago.

As a whole, one can say that the situation has changed - although not much – for the better.

Thank you for sending me your work. I found it very interesting and it allowed me to think once again over my activities here and over the problems whose resolutions are still to come. Your work also enabled me to see myself from aside.

I hope that the examiner will assess your work as excellent.

Yours sincerely,

Julia

March 2000

For the correctness of the translation:

A K Apostolov
University of Birmingham
Centre For Russian and East European Studies

Здравствуйте, дорогая Мишель!

Конечно же я Вас помню. Денис, у которого Вы тогда присутствовали на занятиях до сих пор вспоминает нас и спрашивает о Вас.

Я с интересом прочитала Ваше издурованное Ваше интервью и конечно же не возражаю, чтоб Вы не использовали в своей диссертации. Мне кажется, что многое из того, что Вы описали даже точнее, чем то, что я сделала. Те проблемы, которое мы с Вами обсуждали остаются актуальными для школы и по сей день. Но есть и неизменяемые моменты, в извращенной ситуации к лучшему. Многие из проблем начали постепенно, медленно, но не забыть из практики школы. Стали, конечно же, появляться и новые, такие как увлечение в школе компьютерными играми из перускопозитивной семьи. В нашей школе в этом году собрались группа единомышленников, разрабатывающих проект создания в нашей школе специального коррекционного - развивающего блока для детей с особыми образовательными нуждами. В этом блоке будут входить такие специалисты как: психолог, логопед, дефектолог, социальный работник, медсестра, педагоги школы.

Намерены, что они будут оказывать всестороннюю поддержку и помощь детям со специальными образовательными нуждами, такие как например, Саша о котором мы упоминали в своей работе. Кстати, сейчас он продолжает учиться в 4 классе нашей школы. И хотя его успехи в учебе не так уж и велики, преподаванием доволен полностью, что он посещает школьные занятия. А это, с их стороны, уже прекрасные терпимость по отношению к нестандартному ребенку. Хотелось бы отметить, что наши некоторые прогресс в отношении учителей к таким детям. Все больше педагогов начинают понимать их проблемы и стараются им помочь. Все больше преподавателей стремится к повышению своей квалификации, к самосовершенствованию по этой проблеме. Это происходит потому, что дети с проблемами в нашей школе становятся с каждым годом больше. Когда во班里 у нас в школе, там была в запланированном строительстве капитальный ремонт. Теперь ремонт закончен и школа стала выглядеть хорошо. Вот видите, что наша школа работает в эскалатор. Теперь моя команда допосылает мое здание для расширения школы и теперь работаем в эскалаторе и не 63, как это было 2 года назад.

В целом, можно сказать, что ситуация
немного, но изменилась в лучшую
сторону.

Спасибо за проделанную работу. Она
была для меня очень интересна
и позволила еще раз порадоваться
нашей своей деятельности, над проби-
лем, которые предстоит еще решить
и позволить увидеть себя со стороны.
Я надеюсь, что экзаменаторы оценят
вашу работу, как положительную.

С уважением, Всема.

март, 2000 год.

LESSON OBSERVATION

Background Details

Name of teacher: [redacted] Ilse

Name of school: [redacted] Pieter Von Wet

Date: 30 Jan /98

Ages and number of children: Gr 4 - 30 kids

Lesson Information

Subject: Science

Content: Plants

Specific teaching goals of lesson: - start of long-term project on 1 plant of child's choice
Critical objectives: organising selves, communication

Science objectives: & specific outcomes from cur 2005

Summary from Fieldnotes

Teaching Methods: - experimental - children new to this class -
- facilitation of research by individual pupils on plants of their choice

Content/Materials:

- extracting content on plants from diverse materials, some provided

Pupil Assessment/Feedback:

- classlist - tick off outcomes reached -
teacher observes "how they are coping"

Incidents of Interest:

- handling of individual demands
- children choosing to sit apart

LESSON OBSERVATION FIELDNOTES

TIME	STAGE	TEACHER ACTION	PUPIL ACTION	COMMENTS/QUERIES
8:40		greet children & introduces me		
8:42		hands out envelopes to each group (seated together)		all envelopes same)
			yes	
			inaudible pupil question	
			answer	
8:45		"you can open up"		some (not all) groups open
		- reads instructions		- listen
				- child playing w/ pen
		teacher takes away		

LESSON OBSERVATION FIELDNOTES

TIME	STAGE	TEACHER ACTION	PUPIL ACTION	COMMENTS/QUERIES
8:46		<p>explaining - based on notes from before - are plants useful/harmful/deciduous etc. (classification) - instructions - "all the information you have you must put in your books" - speaking emphatically & animatedly (in English for my benefit)</p> <p>"where's your book Jean"</p>	<p>listening</p> <p>watch & listen.</p>	
8:50		<p>answers - individuals then announcements to whole class</p>	<p>answer</p> <p>several children ask specific questions about activity - which book? etc.</p>	

8:51

"I first want to see you all reading"

8:52

some reading,
many talking - meeting
out contents of packs

8:54

shows example of what
one child is doing in
choosing plants.

2

lots of ind. questions
about what they can
& should do - come to
teacher

- answer individual questions - looking at sheets - some
arguing over them - some
getting on w/ it

- taking note of specific
examples of + & - behaviour

"note in Africans"

9:04

goes to groups & individuals to
"intervene", help & evaluate.

*
function
of
groups:

LESSON OBSERVATION FIELDNOTES

TIME	STAGE	TEACHER ACTION	PUPIL ACTION	COMMENTS/QUERIES
		-continues to field ind. questions & make whole-group announcements w/ instructions & interventions		
9:10.		" & dealing w/ admin task & price	continue to ask questions & bring money for juice - majority working on task (but not those who demand/receive attention)	* how to deal w/ demands of ind. children who need/demand attention?
9:15		"listen! you must put away those folders ... cont. Mon - get further info from library (still dealing w/ juice stuff too)	-varying degrees of attention - putting folders away.	* how many kids to you there had reached the point you hoped?

Appendix Seven – Field Diary Extracts

29/01/98 (South Africa)

Yesterday was day 2 with (Joy). Lots of good stuff from the interviews - esp regarding her attitudes to reform and her background. Was able to construct quite a good 'holistic' view of her practice, priorities and influences, with the personal obviously her main concern... Moral/democratic values issue interestingly kept at individual level while social democratic dimension remains distant. Very comfortable together - she's very vibrant, loves to gossip & is very curious. Her reference to 'nigger balls' caught me off guard and was very disappointing... Again, the strange tension of dealing with outrageously kind and comfortingly familiar people who are probably racist in places I can't even reach.

3/2/98 (South Africa)

A frustrating day of cooling my heels... I feel really hog-tied... I've hitch-hiked around Sierra Leone, passed on dangerous information in a rebel war zone in Indonesia and taught murderers to read in TCI - and here I am stuck in a suburb of Pretoria feeling like I can't get to where I need to be, or even find out where that is. What could I be doing differently??

5/2/98 (South Africa)

Why is it that continental divides notwithstanding, almost every teacher I've seen in a developing country uses frontal content-driven methods and relies heavily on repetition?

11/2/98 (South Africa)

Plunged headlong into the 3rd World today (not that the last few schools were highly developed). Rural farm school - it even smelled African! Surrounded by grassy fields and a few mud huts, from the broken floor to the iron cooking pot it was real rural Africa...

12/2/98 (South Africa)

Today was an outrageous waste of time in terms of pupil learning: it was an extended exercise in collation, cutting and pasting, with a few equally useless bits of copying and colouring, spiced liberally with confusing misinformation. The good news is that I was there to observe and try to understand, not to try to make a difference (although something in me felt I should try)... The sight of the tired and snotty-nosed little girl with the worn shoes, who had walked 10 km to come to grade one; the keenness of the teenagers who have spent 6 years learning how not to learn at school: this kind of resilience deserves better than absent teachers and empty lessons.

3/4/98 (Russia)

It's about -14 C and covered in snow in Perm - what a shock to the system. First saw the snow landing in Kazan - not a town in sight - just snow and trees and ex-army vehicles. Perm from the air - sprawling, indeterminate - everything looking at once strange and familiar... Hotel: grim unhelpful faces; dim lights; warm dry air; homey brown carpets, wallpaper and net curtains; matching brown water...

4/4/98 (Russia)

Interesting group of trainees - sullen, cynical air created by a dominant few - actually several optimists lurking quietly (volunteered to be case study victims!) Great moment when I told them about South African comparison - complete incredulity. During observed lecture (full of mysterious studies correlating such isolates as wrist exercise and linguistic development) participants happily interjected, rejected, redirected.

10/4/98 (Russia)

It's hard not to feel like a pain when everything is so staged and elaborate for visitors... I once again found myself expecting so much less than was being offered and thereby proving more awkward than if I had expected more... Tamara had lined up a host of teachers, psychologists and the like. So I compromised - a case study with her choice of expert, tidy, pleasant, well-prepared primary teacher, and one with (Tatyana's) more rough edges and open English... This study is up against some powerful cultural phenomena here. Ontologically, the notion that the world is out there and fixed - and therefore, epistemologically knowable and quantifiable. The sense that valuable research is about survey and statistics. The belief that behind every well-meaning question and observation is an inspection meriting a parade of one's finest. The belief that to compare means to rank in order (hence the almost offence at comparison with South Africa). The belief that I'm here for a pleasant time and therefore need to be kept comfortable (and certainly away from the worst schools and - gasp - the countryside). The frustrated will to find the answer I want to hear when the questions are so bizarre and my intentions so opaque (while in reality they are exactly as I say they are and there are no right answers)...

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